A BRIEF INSTRUCTION IN THE WORSHIP of GOD, AND DISCIPLINE OF THE CHURCHES OF THE NEW TESTAMENT, BY WAY OF QUESTION AND ANSWER;

With an Explication and Confirmation of those Answers.

Printed, 1667.

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A

Short Catechiſm:

with an Explication upon the ſame.

Q. 1. *WHat doth God require of us in our dependance on him, that he may be glorified by us, and we accepted with him?*

Anſw. That we (a) Worſhip him (b) in and by the wayes of his own appointment. (*a*) Matth. 4. 10. Rev. 14. 7. Deut. 6. 13. chap. 10. 20. (*b*) Lev. 10. 1, 2, 3. Exod. 24. 3. Gen. 18. 19. Joſhua 23. 6, 8. Zach. 14. 16.

Explication.

By the *Worſhip* of God inquired after, not that which is *natural* or *moral*,

which is required in the firſt Commandment is intended. Such is our faith and confidence in him, our fear of him, our ſubjection of ſoul and conſcience unto him, as the great Soveraign Lord, firſt cauſe, laſt end, Judge and Rewarder of all men; the Law whereof was originally written in the heart of Man, and hath been variouſly improved and directed by new Revelations and Inſtitutions. And this Worſhip is called *naturall*, upon a double Account.

Firſt, Becauſe it depends on the *nature* of God, a due perception and underſtanding whereof, makes all this Worſhip indiſpenſibly neceſſary: for none can *know* God, but it is his duty *to glorifie him as God*, that is, to believe in him, love him, truſt him, and call upon him, which all are therefore *curſed* that do not, *Pſalm* 79. 6. 2 *Theſ.* 1. 8.

And Secondly, Becauſe it was in the principle of it concreated with the *nature* of man, as that which ſuited, directed, and enabled him to anſwer the Law of his Creation, requiring this obedience of him in his dependance on God. And this Worſhip is *invariable*: but it concerneth

thoſe

thoſe *outward wayes* and means whereby God hath appointed that faith, and love, and fear of him to be exerciſed and expreſſed unto his glory. And this kind of *Worſhip*, though it depend not upon the *nature of God*, but upon his free and arbitrary diſpoſal, and ſo was of old liable unto alterations; yet God did ever ſtrictly require in the ſeveral ſtates and conditions that his Church hath gone through in the World. And this is that, which moſt commonly in the Scripture is called by the name of *the worſhip of God*; as that whereby all the acceptable actings of the ſouls of men towards him are expreſſed, and the only way of owning and acknowledging him in the World, as alſo of entertaining a viſible intercourſe with him. This therefore he calls for, and requires indiſpenſibly of all that draw nigh to him, and that becauſe he is *the Lord our God*, *Rev.* 14. 6, 7. *Mat.* 4. 10. *Deut.* 10. 12, 13. For his obſervance hereof, doth he ſo approve of *Abraham*, *Gen.* 18. 19. And ſets it down as an everlaſting Law unto all others, that in a holy obſervation thereof, *he will be ſanctified in all that draw nigh unto him*, *Lev.* 10.

1, 2, 3. his commands also concerning it, are multiplyed in the Scripture, with the approbation of all those that attend unto them. We may not think to find acceptance with God, or to inherit the promises, if supposing our selves to adhere unto him in Worship *internall* and *naturall*, we neglect that which is *externall* and of his free appointment: for besides, that we renounce thereby our inward dependance on him also, in not observing his commands, as *Adam* did in transgressing an *Institution*, we become wholly useless unto all the ends of his Glory in the World, which is not the way to come to an enjoyment of him. Neither, do we only express and profess our inward *morall naturall worship* of God hereby, by which means it becomes the principall way and instrument of faith and trust exerting themselves in our obedience, but also it is a most effectual *help* and assistance unto the principle of that natural worship, strengthening the *habit* of it, and *exciting* it unto all suitable *actings*, unto its increase and growth.

Qu. 2. *By what means do we come to know that God will thus be worſhipped?*

Anſw. That God is to be worſhipped, and that according to his own will and appointment, is a (a) principall branch of the Law of our creation, written in our hearts; the (b) ſenſe whereof is renewed in the ſecond Commandment; but the wayes and meanes of that worſhip, depend meerly on Gods (c) Soveraign pleaſure and Inſtitution. (*a*) Rom. 1. 21. chap. 2. 14, 15. Acts 15. 16, 17. Acts 17. 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29. *verſes.* (*b*) Exodus 20. 4, 5, 6. (*c*) Jer. 7. 31. Exod. 25. 40. Heb. 3. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6. John 1. 18.

Explication.

Theſe two things all men ſee by nature.

Firſt, That God, however they miſtook in their apprehenſions of him, would be and was to be worſhipped with ſome *outward ſolemn* worſhip. So that although ſome are reported to have even caſt off all knowledge and ſenſe of *a divine being*, yet never any were heard of, that came

to an acknowledgement of any God, true or false, but they all consented, that he was constantly and solemnly to be worshipped. And that not only by *individuall Persons*, but by *Societies* together, that so they might own and honour him whom they took for their God. And thus far outward worship is required in the first Commandement; namely, that the inward be exercised and expressed. When we take God for our God, we take him to worship him, *Deut.* 10. 12, 13. other thoughts, namely of *inward* worship, without *outward* expression at all, or any time, or in any way, are but a covert unto *Atheism*. And,

Secondly, This also they are lead to an apprehension of, by the same light whereby they are *a Law unto themselves*, *Rom.* 2. 14. that God would be worshipped in the *way*, and by the *means* that he himself appointed and approved, whence none among the *Heathen* themselves undertook to appoint wayes and *Ceremonies* of Worship, but still they pretended to derive the knowledge of them from the *Gods themselves*, of whom they reckoned that every one would be worshipped in

his

his own way. And becauſe notwitſtanding this pretence, being left of God, and deluded of *Satan*, they did invent falſe and fooliſh wayes of worſhip, not only not appointed of God, but ſuch as were unſuited unto thoſe *inbred notions* which they had of his nature and excellencies, the Apoſtle convinces and diſproves them, as men acting againſt the *light of nature*, and principles of reaſon, *Rom.* 1. 21. they might have ſeen, *that*, in their Idolatry they anſwered not their own inbred conceptions of the *Divine power and Godhead*, ſo as to glorifie him as God. And in the like manner doth he argue at large, *Acts* 17. 23. but beyond this, the *inbred light of nature* could not conduct any of the Sons of Men. This alone is contained in the firſt Precept, that God was to be worſhipped they knew, and that he was to be worſhipped by wayes and means of his own appointment they knew; but what thoſe wayes and means were, they knew not. Theſe alwayes depended on Gods Soveraign will and pleaſure, and he made them known to whom he pleaſed, *Pſalm* 147. 19, 20. And although ſome of the

wayes

wayes which he doth appoint, may ſeem to have a great compliance in them unto the *light of nature*, yet in his worſhip he accepts them not on that account; but meerly on that of his own inſtitution; and this as he hath declared his will about in the ſecond Commandment; ſo he hath ſeverely forbidden the *addition* of our own inventions unto what he hath appointed: ſending us for inſtruction unto him alone, whom he hath endowed with *Soveraign Authority* to reveal his will, and ordain his worſhip, *John* 1. 18. *Matth.* 17. 5. 1 *Chron.* 16. 13.

Qu. 3. *How then are theſe wayes and means of the worſhip of God made known unto us?*

Anſw. In and by the written word only; which contains a full and perfect Revelation of the will of God; as to his whole worſhip, and all the concernments of it: John 5. 39. Iſa. 8. 20. Luke 16. 19. 2 Tim. 3. 15, 16, 17. 1 Pet. 1. 19. Deut. 4. 2. chap. 12. 32. Joſhua 1. 7. Prov. 30. 6. Rev. 22. 20. Iſaiah 29. 13.

Explication

Explication.

The *End* wherefore God granted his word unto the Church, was, that thereby it might be inſtructed in his mind and will, as to what concerns the worſhip and obedience that he requireth of us, and which is accepted with him. This the whole Scripture it ſelf every where declares and ſpeaks out unto all that do receive it; as 2 *Tim.* 3. 15, 16, 17. with the reſidue of the teſtimonies above recited do declare. It ſuppoſeth, it declareth, that of our ſelves we are ignorant how God is, how he ought to be worſhipped, *Iſa.* 8. 20. Moreover it manifeſts him to be a jealous God, exerciſing that holy property of his nature in an eſpecial manner about his worſhip; rejecting and deſpiſing every thing that is not according to his will, that is not of his Inſtitution, *Exod.* 20. 4, 5.

That we may know what is ſo, he hath made a Revelation of his mind and will in his *written word*, that is, the *Scripture*; and to the end that we might expect inſtruction from thence alone in his worſhip, and act therein accordingly.

Firſt,

Firſt, he ſends us and directs us thereunto, expreſly for that purpoſe, *Iſa.* 8.28. *Luke* 16.19. *John* 5.39. and not once intimates in the leaſt, any other way or means of inſtruction unto the end.

Secondly, He frequently affirms, that it is ſufficient, able, and perfect to guide us therein, 2 *Tim.* 3. 15, 16, 17. 1 *Pet.* 1.19. *Pſalm* 19. 7, 8, 9. and whereas he hath expreſly given it unto us for that end, if there be any want or defect therein, it muſt ariſe from hence, that either God would not, or could not give unto us a perfect Revelation of his will; neither of which can be imagined.

Thirdly, He hath commanded us to obſerve all whatſoever he hath appointed therein, and not to make any addition thereunto, *Joſhua* 1. 7. *Deut.* 4. 2. *chap.* 12. 32. *Prov.* 30. 6. *Revel.* 22. 20. And,

Fourthly, Peculiarly interdicted us the uſe of any ſuch things, as are of the inſtitution or appointment of Men, *Iſa.* 29. 13, 14. So that from the Scriptures alone, are we to learn what is accepted with God in his worſhip.

Qu. 4. *Have theſe wayes and means been alwayes the ſame from the beginning?*

Anſw. No! But God hath altered and changed them at ſundry ſeaſons, according to the counſell of his own will, ſo as he ſaw neceſſary for his own Glory, and the Edification of his Church. See Geo. 2. 16, 17. Gen. 17. 10, 11. Exod. 12. 3, 4, 5. Exod. 20. Chap. 25. 9. Heb. 1. 1. Heb. 9. 10, 11, 12.

Explication.

The *externall* worſhip whereof we ſpeak, being as was ſhewed before, not *naturall* or moral, ariſing neceſſarily from the dependance of the rationall creature on God, as its firſt Cauſe, chiefeſt Good, laſt End, and Soveraign Lord, but proceeding from the meer will and pleaſure of God, determining how he will be honoured and glorified in the world, was alwayes *alterable* by him, by whom it was appointed. And whereas ever ſince the entrance of ſin into the World, God had alwayes reſpect unto the promiſe of the Lord Chriſt, and his mediation, in whom alone

alone he will be glorified, and faith in whom he aimed to begin and increaſe in all his worſhip, he hath ſuited his Inſtitutions of the means thereof, to that diſpenſation of Light and knowledge of him, which he was pleaſed at any time to grant. Thus immediately after the giving of the *promiſe*, he appointed *ſacrifices* for the great means of his worſhip; as to glorifie himſelf expreſly by Mens off ring unto him of the principal good things which he had given them, ſo to inſtruct them in the faith, and confirm them in the expectation of the *great ſacrifice* for ſin that was to be offered by the promiſed ſeed, *Gen.* 4. 3, 4. *Heb.* 11. 4. Theſe were the firſt inſtituted worſhip of God in the World after the entrance of ſin. Hereunto he nextly added *Circumciſion*, as an expreſs ſign of the Covenant, with the grace of it, which he called *Abraham* and his ſeed unto by Jeſus Chriſt, *Gen.* 17. 10, 11. And to the ſame general end and purpoſe, he afterwards ſuperadded the *Paſſeover* with its attendant inſtitutions, *Exod.* 12. 23, 24. And then the whole Law of inſtitutions contained in Ordinances, by the Miniſte-

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ry of Angels on Mount *Sinai*, *Exod* 20. So by ſundry degrees, he built up that fabrick of his *outward worſhip*, which was ſuited in his infinite wiſdom, unto his own glory, and the edification of his Church, untill the exhibition of the promiſed ſeed, or the coming of Chriſt in the fleſh, and the accompliſhment of the work of his mediation, *Heb.* 1. 1. for unto that ſeaſon were thoſe Ordinances to ſerve, and no longer, *Heb.* 9. 10, 11, 12. And then were they removed by the ſame authority whereby they were inſtituted and appointed, *Col.* 2. 14, 18, 19, 20. So that though God would never allow, that Men, upon what pretence ſoever ſhould make any alteration in the worſhip appointed by him; by adding unto it, any thing of their own, or omitting ought that he had commanded, either in matter or manner, notwithſtanding that he knew that it was to abide but for a ſeaſon, but commanded all men ſtraitly to attend to the obſervation of it whileſt it was by him continued in force, *Mal.* 4. 4. yet he alwayes reſerved unto himſelf the Soveraign power of altering, changing, or utterly aboliſhing

ing it at his own pleasure: which authority he exerted in the Gospel as to all the meer Institutions of the Old Testament. Whilest they continued, he inforced them with *morall* reasons, as his own holiness and Authority; but those reasons prove not any of those institutions to be *morall*, unless they ensue upon those reasons alone, and are nowhere else commanded: for being once instituted and commanded, they are to be inforced with *morall* considerations, taken from the nature of God, and our Duty, in reference unto his Authority. So, saith he, *Thou shalt reverence my Sanctuary, I am the Lord*, which no more proves that *a morall Duty*, then that enjoyned upon the same foundation, *Levit.* 11. 44. *I am the Lord your God, ye shall therefore sanctifie your selves, and ye shall be holy, for I am holy, neither shall ye defile your selves with any manner of creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth.* Not defiling our selves with the touching, or eating of creeping things, is now no morall Duty, since the institution is ceased, although it be inforced by many morall considerations.

Qu. 5.

Qu. 5. *Is there any farther alteration to be expected in, or of those institutions and ordinances of worship, which are revealed and appointed in the Gospel?*

Answ. No! The last compleat Revelation of the will of God being made by the Son, who is Lord of all, his Commands and Institutions are to be observed inviolably unto the end of the World, without alteration, diminution, or addition, Heb. 1. 1. chap. 10. 25, 26, 27. Matth. 28. 20. 1 Cor. 11. 26. 1 Tim. 6 14.

Explication.

It was shewed before, that all the Institutions of the Old Testament had respect unto the coming of Christ in the flesh, who was the *end of the Law*, Rom. 10. 4. and thereupon they were subject to *alteration* or *abolition* upon a twofold account.

First, Because that which they were appointed principally to instruct the Church in, and to direct it unto the expectation of, was upon his coming accomplished and fulfilled, so that their

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end was abſolutely taken away; and they could no more truly teach the mind and will of God: for they would ſtill direct unto that which was to come, after it was paſt and accompliſhed. And this is that which the Apoſtle *Paul* ſo variouſly proves, and fully confirms in his Epiſtle to the *Hebrews*, eſpecially in the 7, 8, 9. and 10. Chapters.

Secondly, The Lord Chriſt during their continuance, was to come as the Lord over his whole houſe, with more full and ample authority, then *any* of thoſe, whom God had employed in the inſtitution of his Ordinances of old, were intruſted withall, Heb. 1. 1, 2, 3. *He ſpake in former dayes by the Prophets, but now by the Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all*, Chap. 3. 5, 6. *Chriſt as a Son over his own houſe, whoſe houſe are we.* And therefore they are all to be at his diſpoſall, to confirm or remove, as he ſaw reaſon and occaſion. And this he did *virtually* in the ſacrifice of himſelf, or the blood of his Croſs, fulfilling and finiſhing of them all, John 19. 30. *Breaking down the middle wall of partition, aboliſhing in his fleſh the enmity, even the*

Law

Law of Commandments contained in Ordinances, blotting out the hand-writing of Ordinances, he took it out of the way, nayling it to his Cross, Eph. 2. 15. Coloss. 2. 14.

Secondly, *Authoritatively*, by his Spirit in the Apostles, and the doctrine of the Gospel preached by them, Acts 15. 10, 11. *Now therefore why tempt ye God, to put a yoak upon the neck of the Disciples, which neither our Fathers nor we were able to bear, but we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved, even as they*, Gal. 3. 24, 25. *Wherefore the Law was our Schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith; but after that faith is come, we are no longer under a Schoolmaster*, Chap. 5. 2, 3, 4. and *eventually* or providentially, when he caused *sacrifice and offering to cease, by the Prince of the people, that came with an Army making desolate, to destroy both City and Sanctuary*, Dan. 9. 26, 27. according to his prediction, *Mat.* 24. 2. But now under the *New Testament*, the worship that is appointed in the Gospel, is founded in, and built upon what is already past and accomplished, namely

the death and life of Jesus Christ with the sacrifice and atonement for sin made thereby, 1 *Cor.* 11. 23, 24, 25, 26. which can never be again performed; neither is there any thing else to the same purpose, either *needfull* or possible, *Heb.* 10. 26. So that there is not any ground left for any new institution of worship, or any alteration in those that are already instituted. Nor,

Secondly, Can any one be expected to come from God with a greater and more full authority for the Revelation of his mind, than that wherewith his only Son was accompanied; which yet must be, if any alterations were to be made in the appointments of worship that he hath instituted in the Gospel.

For no Inferior, nor an equall authority, can abolish or alter that which is already appointed, so as to give satisfaction unto the consciences of men in obedience unto such alterations. And therefore because there arose not a Prophet like unto *Moses* under the Old Testament, there could be no alteration made in his institutions, but the Church was bound severely to observe them all

untill the coming of Chriſt, Mal. 4. 4. *Remember ye the Law of* Moſes *my ſervant, which I commanded unto him in* Horeb, *for all* Iſrael *with his Statutes and Judgements*; and that becauſe there *aroſe not a Prophet afterwards in* Iſrael *like unto* Moſes, *whom the Lord knew face to face, Deut.* 34. 10. And our Apoſtle to prove the right of Chriſt to alter the Ordinances of the Law, layes his foundation in manifeſting that he was *above the Angels*, Heb. 1. 4. *being made ſo much better than the Angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they*, and that becauſe the Law was given by the *Miniſtery* of Angels, *chap.* 2. 2. and ſo alſo that he was greater than *Moſes*, chap. 3. 3. *For this man was accounted worthy of more glory than* Moſes, *in as much as he who hath builded the houſe, hath more honour than the houſe*; Moſes *verily was faithfull in all his houſe, as a ſervant, but Chriſt as a Son over his own houſe*: Becauſe *Moſes* was the Law-giver, and the Mediator between God and Man in the giving of the Law. Now if this be the ſole foundation and warrant of the alteration made of *Mo-*

saical Ordinances by Christ, namely that he was greater and exalted above all those whose *Ministry* was used in the dispensation of the Law, unless some can be thought to be greater, and exalted in authority above the Son of God, there can be no alteration expected in the Institutions of the Gospel.

Qu. 6. *May not such an Estate of faith and perfection in obedience be attained in this life, as wherein Believers may be freed from all obligation unto the observation of Gospel Institutions?*

Answ. No! For the Ordinances and Institutions of the Gospel being inseparably annexed unto the Evangelical administration of the Covenant of Grace, they may not be left unobserved, disused, or omitted, whilest we are to walk before God in that Covenant, without contempt of the Covenant it self, as also of the Wisdom and Authority of Jesus Christ. Heb. 3. 3. 4, 5, 6. Rom. 6. 3, 4, 5, 6. Luke 22. 19, 20. 1 Cor. 11. 24, 25. 26. Heb. 10. 25. Rev. 2. 5. chap. 3. 3.

Explication

Explication.

All our faith, all our obedience in this life, what ever may be obtained, or attained unto therein, it all belongs unto our walking with God in the Covenant of Grace, wherein God dwells with Men, and they are his people, and God himſelf is with them to be their God. Other wayes of communion with him, of obedience unto him, of enjoyment of him on this ſide Heaven and Glory, he hath not appointed nor revealed. Now this is the Covenant that God hath made with his people; *That he will put his Laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts, and will be to them a God, and they ſhall be to him a people, and he will be mercifull to their unrighteouſneſs and their ſins and their iniquities will he remember no more*, Heb. 8. 9, 10, 11, 12. And what ever Men attain unto, it is by vertue of the grace of that Covenant, nor is there any Grace promiſed in the Covenant to lead men in this *life*, or to give them up unto a ſtate of perfection ſhort of glory. Unto this Covenant, are

the institutions of Gospel Worship annexed, and unto that administration of it which is granted unto the Church upon the coming and death of Christ. Without a renunciation and relinquishment of that Covenant, and the grace of it, these institutions cannot be omitted or deserted. If Men suppose that they have attained to an estate wherein they need neither the grace of God, nor the mercy of God, nor the blood of Christ, nor the Spirit of Christ, it is not much material, what they think of the Ordinances of worship. Their pride and folly, without that mercy which is taught, promised and exhibited in those Ordinances, will speedily be their ruine. Besides, the Lord Christ is the absolute *Lord over his own house*, Heb. 3. 4, 5, 6. And he hath given out the Laws whereby he will have it guided and ruled whilest it is in this World. In and by these Laws, are his Ordinances of Worship established: for any persons on what pretence soever, to plead an exemption from the obligation of those Laws, it is nothing but to cast of the *Lordship* and dominion of Christ himself. And yet

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farther, to secure our obedience in this matter, he hath expresly commanded the continuance of them untill his comeing unto Judgement, as in the places above quoted will appear.

Qu. 7. *What are the chief things that we ought to aim at in our observation of the institutions of Christ in the Gospel?*

Answ. 1. To sanctifie the name of God. 2. To own and avow our professed subjection to the Lord Jesus Christ. 3. To build up our selves in our most holy faith. And 4. To testifie and confirm our mutuall love, as we are Believers.. (1.) Levit. 10. 3. Heb. 12. 28, 29. (2.) Deut. 26. 17. Josh. 24. 22. 2 Cor. 8, 5. (3.) Ephes. 4. 12, 13, 14, 15, 16. Jude 20. (4.) 1 Cor. 10. 16, 17.

Explication.

That we may profitably and comfortably, unto the glory of God, and our own edification, be exercised in the observation of the Institutions and Worship of God, we are alwayes to con-

ſider what are the *ends* for which God hath appointed them, and commanded our attendance unto them, that ſo our obſervance of them may be the *obedience of faith.* For what ends ſoever God hath appointed them unto, for that end are they uſefull and effectuall, and to no other. If we come to them for any other end, if we uſe them for any other purpoſe, or with any other deſign, if we look for any thing in them or by them, but what God hath appointed them to communicate unto us, we diſhonour God, and deceive our own ſouls. This we ought diligently to enquire into, to know not only *what* God requires of us, but *wherefore* alſo he requires it, and what he aims at therein. Some of the principall things whereof are enumerated in this *Anſwer.* And it is well known how horribly many of the inſtitutions of the Goſpel, have been by ſome, eſpecially the *Papiſts*, abuſed, by a neglect of the *ends* of God in them, and impoſing *new ends* of their own upon them unto Superſtition and Idolatry. Grace is aſcribed unto the *outward obſervance* of them, whereas all Grace is of the promiſe,

miſe, and the promiſe in the Covenant is given only to the faith of the right obſervers. The *elements* in the Sacrament of the *Euchariſt*, are turned into a God, firſt worſhipped, and then devoured, with many the like abominations.

Qu. 8. *How may we ſanctifie the name of God in the uſe of Goſpell Inſtitutions?*

Anſw. 1. By an holy reverence of his Soveraign Authority appointing of them. 2. An holy regard unto his ſpeciall preſence in them. 3. Faith in his promiſes annexed to them. 4. Delight in his Will, Wiſdome, Love and Grace manifeſted in them. 5. Conſtancy and perſeverance in obedience unto him in their due Obſervation. (1.) Levit. 10. 3. Mal. 1. 6. Rom. 4. 11. Exod. 20. 6, 7. James 4. 12. (2.) Mat. 28. 20. Iſaiah 59. 21. Exod. 29. 43, 44, 45. (3.) Gen. 15. 6. Heb. 4. 2. 6. Exod. 12. 27, 28. 2 Cor. 6. 16, 17, 18. chap. 7. 1. (4.) Pſal. 88. 1, 2, 4, 10. Pſal. 65. 4. Pſal. 36. 7, 8. (5.) Pſalm. 23. 6. Pſal. 27. 4. Rev. 2. 3, 10. Gal. 6. 9. Heb. 10. 23, 24, 25. Heb. 12. 3.

Explication.

Explication.

This is the firſt thing that God requireth us to attend unto, in the celebration of the Ordinances of his worſhip; namely, that we therein *ſanctifie his name*, the greateſt duty that we are called unto in this world. This he layes down as the generall rule of all we do herein Levit. 10. 3. *I will*, ſaith he, *be ſanctified in them that come nigh unto me, and before all the people I will be glorified.* Whatever we do in his worſhip, we muſt do it that he may be ſanctified, or whatever we do is an abomination to him. Now the principall wayes how we may herein ſanctifie the name of God are expreſſed. As,

Firſt, When in every Ordinance, we conſider his appointment of it, and ſubmit our ſouls and conſciences unto his *authority* therein which if we obſerve any thing in his worſhip but what he hath appointed, we cannot do it. Not formality, not cuſtome, not the precepts of Men, not any thing but the *authority* and command of God, is to be reſpected

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in this obedience. This is the Firſt thing that Faith regards in Divine Worſhip; it reſts not in any thing, cloſeth not with any thing, but what It diſcerns that God hath commanded, and therein it eyes his Authority as he requireth it, Mal. 1. 6. *If I be a Father, where is mine honour? if I be a Maſter, where is my fear?* Rom. 14. 11. *As I live, ſaith the Lord, every knee ſhall bow to me, and every tongue ſhall confeſs to God.* Reverence then unto the authority of God appointing his worſhip, is a principal means of ſanctifying the name of God therein. This was the ſolemn ſanction of all his inſtitutions of old, Deut. 6. 4, 5, 6, 7. *Hear O* Iſrael, *the Lord our God is one Lord, and thou ſhalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy ſoul, and with all thy might; and theſe words which I command thee this Day, ſhall be in thy heart, and thou ſhalt teach them diligently unto thy children.* And the obſervation of them he preſſeth on this account, that the people might fear that *glorious and dreadfull name, the Lord thy God,* Deut. 28. 58. which name he had ſo often engaged in his commands,

commands, saying thou shalt do it; *I am the Lord.* And in the New Testament, our Lord Jesus Christ proposeth his authority as the foundation of his commanding, and our observation of all the institutions of the Gospel, Mat. 28. 18, 19, 20. *Jesus came and spake unto them saying, all power is given me in heaven and earth, go ye therefore, and teach all Nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you.* And he is to be considered in all our obedience, as the great and only Law-giver of his Church, as *the one Law-giver who is able to save and to destroy,* James 4. 12. the Soveraign *Lord over his house,* Heb. 3. 4, 5, 6. unto whom every *knee is to bow,* and every conscience to be in subjection; and he who *heareth not his voice,* is to be cut off from the people of God, Acts 3. 23. *It shall come to pass, that every soul which will not hear that Prophet, shall be destroyed from among the people.*

Secondly, God hath frequently promised his *speciall presence* in and with his

his inſtituted Ordinances. Of old both unto the *things* themſelves, and the *places* wherein they were according to his appointment to be celebrated, thoſe of *places*, being alſo of his ſpeciall inſtitution. Under the New Teſtament, all difference of, and reſpect unto *place* is taken away, John 4. 21. *The hour cometh, when ye ſhall neither in this Mountain, nor yet at* Jeruſalem *worſhip the Father, but the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worſhippers ſhall worſhip the Father in ſpirit and in truth; for the Father ſeeketh ſuch to worſhip him.* And we are commanded in *all places* equally to make our prayers and ſupplications: but his preſence is promiſed and continued with the due celebration of the *things themſelves* by him appointed for his ſervice, Mat. 28. 20. *Teaching them to obſerve all things whatſoever I have commanded you, and loe I am with you even to the end of the world*: In them is the Tabernacle of God with men, and he *dwells among them, and they are his people*, Rev. 21. 3. the promiſe of Chriſt being, that where *two or three are aſſembled in his name, there he will be in*

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midst of them, Mat. 8. 18, 20. And this promised presence of God, or Christ, consisteth, 1. In the power and efficacy which he by his Spirit implants upon his Ordinances to communicate his Grace and mercy unto his Church; it being his Covenant, that his Spirit shall accompany his word for ever unto that purpose, *Isa.* 59. 21. 2. In the special blessing which he gives his people in those duties, both in the acceptance of them and testifying his good will unto them. Exod. 29. 42, 43, 45. *At the Tabernacle of the Congregation will I meet with the People, saith the Lord, there will I meet with the children of* Israel. *And the Tabernacle shall be sanctified by my glory, and I will dwell amongst the children of* Israel, *and will be their God*, Zech. 2. 10, 11. Ezek. 20. 40, 41. *I will accept you with your sweet savour*, Ezek. 43. 27. in both giving them intimate communion with himself by Jesus Christ, *John* 1. 3. By all these, he gives that *special presence* which he requires an especiall reverence and regard of faith unto, whereby his name is yet farther sanctified. 3. God hath given *special promises*, or promises of his speciall

ſpeciall grace unto them that attend upon him in his worſhip in a due manner, and hereunto alſo belongs that ſacred Relation, which by vertue of *divine inſtitution*, is between the *ſacramentall* elements, and the eſpecial Graces of the Covenant which they exhibit and confirm; and the mixing of theſe promiſes with faith, according as they are appropriated unto any particular inſtitution, belongs alſo to the right ſanctification of the name of God. So alſo, 4. doth our *delight* in them: now this *delight* in the worſhip of God ſo much commended in the Scripture, and propoſed unto our example, conſiſts not in any carnall ſelf-pleaſing, or ſatisfaction in the outward modes or manner of the performance of Divine Worſhip, but it is an holy ſoul-refreſhing contemplation on the will Wiſdom, Grace and Condeſcention of God; in that he is pleaſed of his own Soveraign meer will and grace, ſo to manifeſt himſelf unto ſuch poor ſinfull creatures as we are; ſo to condeſcend unto out weakneſs, ſo to communicate himſelf unto us, ſo to excite and draw forth our ſouls unto himſelf, and to

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give us such pledges of his gracious intercourse with us by Jesus Christ: by the contemplation of these things is the soul drawn forth to delight in God.

Lastly, Whereas great *opposition* lyes oftentimes against the Churches obedience unto God in this matter, and much *persecution* befalls it on that account, great *weariness* also being apt from the remainders of unbelief, carnall wisdom, indwelling sin, weakness of the flesh, in Believers themselves to arise in the course thereof, and many temptations also beset them on every hand, to turn them aside from the way of truth and holiness, constancy and perseverance in the due and orderly celebration of all the Ordinances of the Gospel belongs unto this duty. And this *perseverance* respecteth both the things themselves, and the manner of their performance, both which are of the highest concernment for us diligently to attend unto.

First, As to the *things themselves*; herein do we principally glorifie God, and give due honour unto Jesus Christ, when we abide in our professed subjection unto him, and observance of his commands,

against

againſt difficulties, oppoſitions and perſecutions. This he taketh notice of, Rev. 2. 13. *Thou holdeſt faſt my name, and haſt not denyed my faith, even in thoſe dayes wherein* Antipas *was my faithfull Martyr, who was ſlain among you where Satan dwelleth.* And this he requireth of us indiſpenſably if we will be his Diſciples, or ever hope to obtain the reward, Mat. 10. 38, 39. *He that taketh not his Croſs, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me*; and it is he who endureth unto the end, that ſhall be ſaved, *Matth.* 24. 13. And unto them who are faithfull unto the death, and them alone doth he give the Crown of Life, *Rev.* 2. 10. giving us caution not to loſe thoſe things which we have wrought, that we may receive a full reward, 2 *John* 8. And as to the manner of their performance, two things are to be regarded in this duty of perſeverance, and the ſanctification of the name of God therein.

Firſt, The *inward principle* of our obedience, our faith and love which are to be preſerved from decay, Rev. 2. 4, 5. *I have ſomewhat againſt thee, be-*

cause thou hast left thy first love; remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do thy first works, Chap. 3. 3. *Remember how thou hast received, and heard, and hold fast and repent.*

Secondly, The *outward manner* of observance which is to be kept entire, according to the primitive institution of Christ, 1 Cor. 11. 23. *I have received of the Lord, that which also I delivered unto you*, not admitting of any corruptions in it to avoid the greatest trouble, Gal. 5. 11. *And I Brethren, if I yet preach circumcision, why do I yet suffer Persecution?*

Qu. 9. *How do we in our Observation, profess our subjection unto the Lord Jesus Christ and his Gospel?*

Answ. In that being all of them 1. Appointed by him as the head Law-giver, King of his Church. And 2. Made by him the ensignes and tokens of his Kingdom, and Subjects, in their due observation principally consists that profession of him, and his name, which he so often calleth us unto, and so indispensably requireth at our hands,

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Mat. 28. 18, 19, 20. 1 Cor. 11. 23. Heb. 3. 6. Heb. 12. 25. John 8. 31. Chap. 13. 13. Chap. 14. 15, 21, 23. Chap. 15. 14, 17. Chap. 13. 35. Chap. 15. 14. Luke 9. 26. Rom. 10. 10. 1 John 2. 3, 4.

Explication.

The ground and reaſon of this Duty is evident. The Lord Jeſus Chriſt ſtreightly enjoyns all his Diſciples the *profeſſion* of his name, and layes it on them as indiſpenſable unto Salvation, Rom. 10. 10, *With the heart man believeth unto righteouſneſs, with the mouth confeſſion, or profeſſion, is made unto ſalvation,* John 12. 42, 43, 44, 45. Now this *profeſſion* of the name of Chriſt, which is ſo much abuſed and miſtaken in the World, conſiſts in the *keeping of his commandments,* John 15. 14. *ye are my Friends, if ye do whatſoever I command you:* So alſo Mat. 28. 20. his Diſciples are to be taught to do, and obſerve, whatever he commandeth. Now whereas he is the head and King of the Church, the next immediate and ſpecial Law-giver of it appointing unto it all his Ordinances, and

its whole worſhip, as it becomes him who is Lord of the houſe, the inſtitutions of the Goſpel worſhip are his moſt eſpecial commands: And in their obſervation, conſiſts that *profeſſion* of him which he requires of us; Therein doth he call them out of the world by profeſſion, whom he hath redeemed out of it by his blood, 2 Cor. 6. 15, 16, 17. *Rev.* 5. 9. in theſe he exerciſeth his *Kingly*, or *Lordly* power over his Church. *Heb.* 3. 6. and in the willing obedience of his people, gathering themſelves unto the Enſigns of his Rule, he is glorified in the World.

Qu. 10. *How do we in and by them build up our ſelves in our moſt holy faith?*

Anſw. By the exerciſe of that communion with God in Chriſt Jeſus, which in their due Obſervation he graciouſly inbites and admits us unto, for the increaſe of his grace in us, and the teſtification of his love and good will towards us. Gen. 17. 10. Levit. 26. 11, 12. Prov. 9. 5, 6. Ezek. 26. 27, 28. Zach. 14. 16, 17. Mat. 26. 27, 28. Rom. 6. 3.

Explication

Explication.

The next and principall ends of all inſtituted worſhip in reſpect of Believers, are the increaſe of the Grace of God in them, their edification in their moſt holy faith, and the teſtification of the good will of God unto them, Epheſ. 4. 11, 12, 13, 14, 15. *And he gave ſome Apoſtles, and ſome Prophets, and ſome Evangeliſts, and ſome Paſtors, and Teachers, for the perfecting of the Saints, for the work of the Miniſtery, for the edifying of the body of Chriſt, till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the meaſure of the ſtature of the fulneſs of Chriſt; that we henceforth be no more children, toſſed to and fro, and carryed about with every wind of doctrine, by the ſleight of men, and cunning craftineſs whereby they lye in wait to deceive; but ſpeaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Chriſt, from whom the whole body fitly joyned together and compacted, by that which every joynt ſupplyeth accor-*

ding to the effectuall working in the meaſure of every part, maketh increaſe of the body unto the edifying of it ſelf in love. Whence alſo is that prayer of the Apoſtle for the bleſſing of God upon the Church, in the uſe of them, Epheſ. 3. 16, 17, 18. *That he will grant you according to the riches of his glory, to be ſtrengthened with might by his Spirit in the inward man, that Chriſt may dwell in your hearts by faith, that ye being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all Saints, what is the breadth, the length, and depth, and heighth, and to know the love of Chriſt which paſſeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulneſs of God*: For theſe ends, and with a deſign to have them accompliſhed, in and upon their ſouls, ought they to attend unto them. James 1. 21. *Receive with meekneſs the ingrafted word of God, which is able to ſave your ſouls,* 1 Pet. 2. 2. *As new born babes deſire the ſincere milk of the word, that you may grow thereby.* Unto the effecting of theſe ends, eſpecially the increaſe and eſtabliſhment of our faith, are they ſuited and appointed of God, whereon

whereon all their efficacy doth depend. In their due obſervation, doth God give out that ſupply of Grace which he hath promiſed, *Epheſ.* 1. 16, 17, 18, 19. and thus alſo is faith exerciſed, in an eſpecial manner, which is the only ordinary means of its growth and increaſe. Habits both *acquired*, and *infuſed*, are increaſed and ſtrengthened by frequent acts on ſuitable objects, Hoſ. 6. 3. *Then ſhall we know, if we follow on to know the Lord.* In the celebration of Goſpel Ordinances, God in Chriſt propoſeth himſelf in an intimate manner to the believing ſoul, as his God, and reward; and his love in Chriſt, in an eſpeciall manner in ſome Ordinances. So doth Chriſt alſo exhibit himſelf thereunto, Rev. 3. 20. *Behold, I ſtand at the door, and knock, if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will ſupp with him, and he with me.* Faith therefore directed by the word to reſt in God, to receive the Lord Chriſt in the obſervation of his Ordinances, is excited, increaſed, ſtrengthened, and that in anſwer unto the appointment and promiſes of God.

Q^r. 11.

Qu. 11. *How are mutuall love and communion among Believers teſtified and confirmed in their Obſervation?*

Anſw. In that they are appointed by the Lord Chriſt for that end, and in their own nature as attended unto in their Aſſemblies, are in an eſpeciall manner ſuited unto that purpoſe. John 13. 35. 1 Cor. 10. 16, 17. 1 Cor. 11. 18, 19. Epheſ. 4. 4, 5, 6.

Explication.

The principles of mutual, ſpirituall love among Believers, ariſe from their relation unto *one Father*, Matth. 23. 9. *One is your Father which is in Heaven*: who giveth unto all them that believe in Chriſt, *Power to become the ſons of God*, John 1. 12. And their being all *Children* of the ſame Family; that family in Heaven and Earth which is called after the name of God the Father of it, as the Father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, *Epheſ.* 3. 14, 15. and unto Chriſt Jeſus as their elder Brother, who is not *aſhamed to call them Brethren*, Heb. 2. 11. being by him born of God; and from their participation

tion of one and the ſelf ſame Spirit, which dwelleth in them, as they are the *Temple of God*, and the Spirit of God dwelleth in them, 1 *Cor.* 3. 16. as alſo in all the fruits of that one Spirit, 1 *Cor.* 12. 4, 5, 6, 7, 8. and in that *one faith* and hope whereunto they are called, Eph. 4. 4, 5, 6. *endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace, there is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling, one Lord, one Faith, one Baptiſm, one God, and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.* And that love which is not built on theſe principles and foundations, is not *Evangelical*, whatever other ground it may have, or occaſion it may pretend unto. Communion of Saints conſiſts in their mutuall love duly exerciſed according to rule; and all communion is an effect of Union. In Union therefore muſt lye the ſprings of love: and this conſiſts in a joynt incorporation of Believers into Chriſt; *for as the body is one and hath many members, and all the members of that one body being many are one body, ſo alſo is Chriſt*; for by one Spirit we are all baptized into one body; and this they have

have by the means before mentioned, namely their adoption, faith, and inhabitation of the Spirit. Now in the joint celebration of the Ordinances of Gods worſhip, they altogether make profeſſion of theſe principles, and act that one faith, hope, and love jointly, whereof they are made partakers, and thereby grow up more and more into the head by that which every joint ſupplieth, *Eph.* 4. 16. and ſome of them are peculiarly deſigned by the Lord Chriſt, for the teſtification of their love, and union among themſelves, 1 *Cor.* 10. 16, 17. *the cup of bleſſing which we bleſs, is it not the communion of the blood of* Chriſt? *the bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of* Chriſt? *as we being many are one bread, and one body, for we are all partakers of that one bread.*

Qu. 12. *What is principally to be attended unto by us in the manner of the celebration of the worſhip of God, and obſervation of the inſtitutions and Ordinances of the Goſpel?*

Anſw. That we obſerve and do all whatſoever the Lord Chriſt hath commanded

manded us to obſerve, in the way that he hath preſcribed; and that we add nothing unto, or in the obſervation of them, that is of mans invention or appointment. Deut. 4. 2. chap. 12. 32. Jer. 7. 27. Mat. 15. 9, 13. Mat. 17. 5. Coloſſ. 2. 3. Mat. 28. 20. Heb. 3. 5, 4, 5, 6. 1 Cor. 11. 23. Rev. 22. 18. 1 Chron. 16. 13. Iſa. 29. 13.

Explication.

This was in part ſpoken to before on the *third Queſtion*, where it was ſhewed that the *Scripture* is the only way and means, whereby God hath revealed what that worſhip is, which he will accept in and of the Church. Here, moreover, as to the duty of the Church in this matter, three things are aſſerted.

Firſt, That we are to obſerve and *do all whatſoever* the Lord Chriſt hath commanded us to obſerve. This lyes plain in the command, Mat. 28. 20. *Teaching them to obſerve all things whatſoever I have commanded you.* And we are directed unto it in the injunction given us from Heaven, to *hear*, that is obey him in

in all things, *Mat.* 17. 5. he being the *Prophet* to whoſe teachings and inſtructions, we owe obedience on pain of extermination from among the people of God, *Deut.* 18. 15. *Act.* 3. 22, 23. Whatever he hath appointed, commanded, revealed as the will of God to be obſerved in or about the worſhip of God, that is to be kept and obſerved by the Church inviolably. For if we are his Friends and Diſciples, we will keep his commandments. No *diſuſe* of what continuance ſoever, can diſcharge us from the obſervation of inſtitutions. After the Feaſt of *Tabernacles* had been *diſuſed* from the times of *Joſhua*, unto the return from the captivity, the reſtoration of it was required of God and accepted with him, *Neh.* 8. 17. No *abuſe* of how high a nature ſoever can abſolve us from obedience unto an inſtitution, 1 *Cor.* 18. 19, 20, 21, 22, 23. After the great abuſe of the Lords Supper in that Church, the Apoſtle recalls them again unto the obſervation of it, according to the inſtitution of Chriſt. And after the defilement of all the Ordinances of the Goſpel, under the Anti-Chriſtian apoſtacy, yet the Temple and

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the Altar are to be meaſured again, *Rev.* 11. 1. and the Tabernacle of God was again to be raiſed amongſt men. *Rev.* 21. 3. No oppoſition, no perſecution, can give the Church a diſpenſation wholly to omit, and lay aſide the uſe of any thing that the Lord Chriſt hath commanded to be obſerved in the worſhip of God, whileſt we are under the obligation of that great rule, Acts 4. 19. *Whether it be right in the ſight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye.* It is true in the obſervation of poſitive inſtitutions, we may have regard unto rules and preſcriptions of prudence, as to times, places, and ſeaſons; that by no inadvertency or miſcarriage of ours, or advantage taken by the adverſaries of the truth, the edification of the Church be hindred. So the Diſciples met with *the doors ſhut* for fear of the *Jewes*, John 20. 19. and *Paul* met with the Diſciples in the night, in *an upper chamber*, for the celebration of all the Ordinances of the Church, *Acts* 20. 7, 8. yet as to the obligation unto their obſervation, it indiſpenſably binds us, and that alwayes, and that as to all the inſtitutions of Chriſt

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whatever, Heb. 10.25. *Not forſaking the aſſembling of our ſelves together as the manner of ſome is, but exhorting one another, and ſo much the more, as you ſee the day approaching.* To diſpence with Chriſts commands practically is unlawfull; much more doctrinally; moſt of all *authoritatively* as the *Pope* takes on himſelf to do. This then is the Churches duty, to ſearch out all the commands of Chriſt recorded in the Goſpel, and to yield obedience unto them. We are not in this matter, to take up meerly with what we find in practice amongſt others, no, though they be men good or holy. The duty of the Church, and conſequently of every member of it in his place and ſtation, is to ſearch the Scriptures, to inquire into the mind of Chriſt, and to find out whatever is appointed by him, or required of his Diſciples; and that with hearts and minds prepared unto a due obſervation of whatever ſhall be diſcovered to be his will.

Secondly, Whatever belongs unto the worſhip of God in the *way* or *manner* whereby any of the Ordinances of Chriſt is to be performed, comes alſo under the

the command of Chriſt which is duly to be attended unto, and obſerved. Indeed whatever is of this nature appointed by Chriſt, it doth therefore belong to the worſhip of God. And what is not ſo appointed, neither doth, nor can be any part thereof. Of this nature are the celebration of all other Ordinances with prayer; for *every thing is ſanctified by the word of God and prayer*, 1 Tim. 4. 5. of ſome of them indiſpenſably in the aſſemblies of the Church, 1 *Cor.* 10. 16, 17. Chap. 11. 20, 24, 25, 33. With care, in the obſervation of the general rules of love, modeſty, condeſcention and prudence, *doing all things decently and in order*, 1 Cor. 11. 33. Chap. 14. 40. *Geſtures* in ſome ſacred actions, *Mat.* 26. 20, 26. John 13. 23. All which the Church is diligently to inquire into, as things that belong to the pattern of the houſe of God, the goings out thereof, and the comings in thereof, the forms thereof, and the Ordinances thereof, with the Laws thereof, promiſed to be ſhewed unto it, *Ezek.* 43. 11. to attend carefully to their obſervation is its duty, being left at liberty as to all other circumſtances

cumſtances which no authority of man can give any real relation to the worſhip of God unto. Therein lyes the exerciſe of that Spirit of wiſdom, and revelation in the knowledge of the myſterie of the Goſpel, which is given unto the Church, *Epheſ.* 1. 17, 18. It was the *wiſdom* of the antient Church to do and obſerve all that God appointed in the way and manner that he had preſcribed for their obſervance, Deut. 4. 5, 6. *Behold I have taught you ſtatutes and judgements even as the Lord my God commanded me; keep therefore and do them, for this is your wiſdom and underſtanding.* And herein is the command of Chriſt kept inviolate and unblameable. The perſwaſion of ſome, that the Lord hath not preſcribed all things wherein his worſhip is concerned, ſeems to proceed from a negligence in inquiring after what he hath ſo preſcribed: and when once that perſwaſion is entertained, all farther inquiry is ſuperſeded, and deſpiſed. For to what end ſhould any one ſeek after that which he is ſatisfied cannot be found? as that which is not cannot be. But this miſtake will be elſewhere more fully diſcovered.

Thirdly,

Thirdly, A principal part of the duty of the Church in this matter is, to take care that nothing be admitted or practiſed in the Worſhip of God, or as belonging thereunto, which is not inſtituted and appointed by the Lord Chriſt. In its care, faithfulneſs and watchfulneſs herein, conſiſts the principal part of its *loyalty* unto the Lord Jeſus as the Head, King and Law-giver of his Church; and which to ſtir us up unto, he hath left ſo many ſevere interdictions and prohibitions in his word againſt all *additions* to his commands upon any pretence whatever; of which afterwards.

Qu. 13. *Are not ſome Inſtitutions of the New Teſtament ceaſed, as unto any obligation unto their obſervation, and therefore now rightly diſuſed?*

Anſw. (1.) Some Symbolical tokens of moral duties occaſionally uſed, only for preſent inſtruction in thoſe duties, are mentioned in the Goſpel, without any intention to oblige Believers unto the formal conſtant uſe or repetition of them. And (2.) Some temporary appointments relating unto gifts in the Church, beſtowed only for a ſeaſon in

the first plantation of the Gospel are ceased; but (3.) No institution or command of Christ, given unto the whole Church, relating unto the Evangelical administration of the New Covenant, for the use and benefit of all Believers, doth or shall cease to the end of the World, nor can be wholly omitted without a violation of the authority of Jesus Christ himself, John 13. 12, 13, 14, 15. Rom. 16. 16. 1 Cor. 16. 20. 1 Tim. 5. 10. Mark 6. 13. Jam. 5. 14. Matth. 28. 20. 1 Tim. 6. 14. 1 Cor. 11. 26.

Explication.

Mention is made in the Scriptures of sundry things practised by the Lord Christ and his Apostles, which being then in *common use* amongst men, were occasionally made by them *Symbolical* instructions in moral duties. Such were *washing of feet* by one another, the *holy kiss*, and the like; but there being no more in them, but a sanctified use directed unto the present civil customes and usages, the commands given concerning them, respect not the *outward action*, nor

nor appointed any continuance of them, being peculiarly ſuited unto the ſtate of things and Perſons in thoſe Countries; as John 13. 12, 13, 14, 15. *After he had waſhed their feet, and had taken his garments, and was ſet down again, he ſaid unto them, know ye what I have done to ye, ye call me Maſter and Lord, and ye ſay well, for ſo I am; if I then your Lord and Maſter have waſhed your feet, ye alſo ought to waſh one anothers feet, for I have given you an example that ye ſhould do as I have done to you.* 'Tis evident that it is the moral duty of brotherly love, in condeſcention, and mutual helpfulneſs to be expreſſed in all neceſſary offices as occaſion doth require, that is the thing which Jeſus Chriſt here enjoyneth his Diſciples, and leads them to by his own example in an office of love then in uſe in thoſe parts. The ſame is to be ſaid of the *holy kiſs*, Rom. 16. 16. which was a temporary occaſional token of entire love; which may in anſwer thereunto, be expreſſed by any ſober uſage of ſalutation amongſt men to the ſame purpoſe. But the things themſelves were not inſtituted for any continuance, nor

do repreſent any ſpecial grace of the New Covenant, which is inſeperable from every inſtitution of Goſpel worſhip properly ſo called. Common uſages or practiſes therefore, directed to be uſed in a due manner, and unto a proper end, where they are uſed, make them not inſtitutions of worſhip. Neither have they in them as ſo commanded or directed, any one thing that concurs to the conſtitution of a Goſpel-Ordinance: for neither had they their riſe in the authority of Chriſt, nor is any continuance of them enjoyned, nor any promiſe annexed unto them, nor any grace of the New Covenant repreſented or exhibited in them.

Beſides, there were in the firſt Churches continued for a while certain *extraordinary gifts*, that had their effects viſibly on the outward ſenſes of men, and tended not immediately unto the edification of the Church in their faith, but unto the conviction of others, and vindication of the authority of them by whom the Goſpel was Preached and propagated. Such was that *gift of healing* the ſick, which being an eſpecial effect

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of the Holy-Ghoſt for the advantage of the Church in thoſe dayes, in ſome places it was accompanied by *anointing with Oyle*; but this being no univerſal practice, and uſed only in the exerciſe of a gift extraordinary, whoſe uſe and being are long ſince ceaſed, it never was appointed nor intended to be of continuance in the Church, which is not tyed by the Lord Chriſt to the empty ſigns and ſhadows of things whoſe ſubſtance is not enjoyed: beſides, no ſpiritual grace of the Covenant was ever intimated, ſealed, or exhibited by that uſage of *anointing with Oyle*. The firſt mention of it is, *Mark.* 6. 13. where its practice is reckoned among the effects of that *extraordinary power* which the Lord Chriſt committed unto his *twelve Diſciples* on their firſt ſending out, and is referred unto the ſame *ſeries of miracles* which they wrought in purſuit, and by vertue thereof, *they caſt out many Devils, and anointed with Oyle many that were ſick, and healed them.* And by what is there recorded, the ſubſequent mention of it, *James* 5. 14. is to be regulated, but now unto a reall *evangelical* inſtitu-

tion of worship, it is required (1.) That it be a command of Christ manifested by his Word, or Example proposed unto our imitation, *Matth.* 28. 20. (2.) That it be given and enjoyned unto the *whole Church* with the limitation of its administration expressed in the Word, 1 *Cor.* 11. 25. (3.) That unto the due performance of it, Gospel grace be required in them that attend unto it. (4.) That it teach, or represent, or seal, or improve some grace of the Covenant, and have a promise of acceptation annexed unto it, and whatever is thus appointed, the Church is indispensably to continue in the observation of, unto the end of the World.

Quest. 14. *May not the* Church *find out, and appoint to be observed, such religious rites, as being adjoyned unto the celebration of Gods instituted worship, may farther the devotion of the Worshipers, and render the worship it self in its performance more decent, beautiful and orderly, as the appointing of Images, and the like?*

Answ. All acceptable devotion in them that worship God, is the effect of

of faith, which reſpects the precepts and promiſes of God alone. And the comelineſs and beauty of Goſpel worſhip, conſiſteth in its relation unto God by Jeſus Chriſt, as the merciful high-Prieſt over his houſe, with the glorious adminiſtration of the ſpirit therein. The order alſo of it lyeth in the due and regular obſervation of all that Chriſt hath appointed; and therefore all ſuch inventions are in themſelves needleſs, and uſeleſs, and becauſe forbidden, unlawful to be obſerved, Rom. 1. 21. Chap. 14. 23. Heb. 4. 2. Chap. 11. 6. Deut. 13. 4. Chap. 27. 10. Chap. 30. 2, 8, 20. Chap. 11. 27. Matth. 27. 5. Iſa. 29. 13. Heb. 11. 4, 6. Epheſ. 2. 18. 2 Cor. 3. 8, 9, 10, 11. Heb. 10. 19, 20, 21, 22. John 4. 21, 23. 1 Cor. 14. 20. Matth. 28. 20. Exod. 20. 4. Deut. 4. 2. Matth. 15. 13. Iſa. 29. 13. Deut. 12. 32. Chap. 17. 3.

Explication.

Three things are uſually pleaded in the Juſtification of the obſervance of ſuch *rites* and ceremonies in the worſhip of God. (1.) That

(1.) That they tend unto the furtherance of the *devotion* of the Worſhipers.

(2.) That they render the Worſhip it ſelf *comely* and beautiful.

(3.) That they are the great preſervers of *order* in the celebration thereof. And therefore on theſe accounts they may be inſtituted, or appointed by ſome, and obſerved by all. But things are indeed quite otherwiſe, *God is a ſpirit and will be worſhiped in ſpirit and in truth*, John 4.24. And no devotion is acceptable unto him, but what proceedeth from, and is an effect of faith, for *without faith it is impoſſible to pleaſe God*, Heb. 11.6. and faith in all things reſpects the commands and authority of God; for, ſaith he, *in vain do they worſhip me, who teach for doctrines the commandments of men*, Matth. 15.9. and he rejecteth all that honour which is given him by thoſe, whoſe fear towards him, or worſhip of him, is *taught by the precepts of men*, Iſa. 29.13. Theſe things therefore being utterly deſtitute of divine Authority, they can no way farther or promote the *devotion* of the Worſhipers.

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What natural, or carnal affections may be excited by them, as men may inflame themſelves with Idols, *Iſa.* 57. 5. or what *outward*, outſide devotion they may direct unto or excite, is uncertain; but that they are no means of ſtirring up the *grace of God* in the hearts of Believers, or of the increaſe or ſtrengthening of their faith, which things alone God accepts in Goſpel Worſhip, ſeeing they are not appointed by him for any ſuch purpoſe, is moſt certain: for to ſay that any thing will effectually ſtir up devotion, that is, excite, ſtrengthen or increaſe grace in the heart towards God, that is not of his own appointment, is on the one hand, to reflect on his wiſdome and care towards his Church, as if he had been wanting towards it in things ſo neceſſary, which he declares againſt, Iſa. 5. 4. *what*, ſaith he, *could have been done more to my Vineyard, that I have not done in it?* ſo on the other, it extolls the wiſdom of men above what is meet to aſcribe unto it. Shall men find out that, which God would not, or could not, in matters of ſo great importance unto his glory, and the ſouls of them

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that obey him? yea, and it cannot be but that attendance unto them, and their effects muſt needs divert the mind from thoſe proper ſpiritual actings of faith and grace, which is its duty to attend unto. And this is evidently ſeen in them who indulging to themſelves in their obſervation in multiplyed inſtances, as in the Church of *Rome*, have changed the whole ſpiritual worſhip of the Church, into a *Theatrical* pompeous ſhew of carnal devotion.

Secondly, The *comelyneſs* and beauty of Goſpel worſhip, doth not in the leaſt depend upon them, nor their obſervation. The Apoſtle doth in ſundry places expreſly compare the ſpiritual worſhip of the Goſple, with that of the Law, whileſt the Church had a *worldly Sanctuary* and carnal Ordinances, *Heb.* 9. 1. and although it be moſt evident, that the worſhip of the Old Teſtament, did for the glory and ornaments of outward ceremonies, and the ſplendour of their obſervation, far exceed and excell that worſhip which God commands now, as ſuitable unto the *ſimplicity* of the Goſpel, yet doth the Apoſtle prefer *this* for

for glory, comelyneſs and beauty, unſpeakably above the other; which manifeſts that theſe things can have no reſpect unto outward Rites and Ceremonies, wherein the chief admirers of them can no way *vye* for glory with the old worſhip of the Temple. So the Apoſtle, 2 Cor. 3. 7, 8, 9, 10, 11. *if the miniſtration of death, written and engraven in ſtones, was glorious, ſo that the children of Iſrael could not ſtedfaſtly behold the face of* Moſes, *for the glory of his countenance, which glory was to be done away, how ſhall not the miniſtration of the ſpirit be rather glorious; for if the miniſtration of condemnation be glory, much more doth the miniſtration of righteouſneſs exceed in glory: for even that which was made glorious had no glory, in this reſpect, by reaſon of the glory that exceedeth; for if that which was done away is glorious, much more that which remaineth is glorious.* He compareth the two miniſtrations, and the ſeveral worſhips of the *Law* and *Goſpel*, preferring *this* unſpeakably above the other; ſufficiently manifeſting, that the *glory* of it conſiſteth not in any pompeous obſervance

vance of outward Ceremonies. And elſewhere He declareth, that indeed it doth conſiſt in its relation to God in Chriſt, with the liberty and boldneſs of the worſhipers to enter into the holy place, unto the Throne of Grace under the Miniſtry of their merciful and faithful High-Prieſt, being enabled thereunto by the ſpirit of adoption, and ſupplications; for therein, *through Chriſt we have an acceſs in one ſpirit unto the Father*, Eph. 2. 18. as it is expreſſed, Heb. 10. 19, 20, 21. *having therefore boldneſs to enter into the holyeſt by the blood of Jeſus, by a new and living way, which he hath conſecrated for us, through the veil, that is to ſay, his fleſh, and having an High Prieſt over the houſe of God, let us draw near with a true heart, in full aſſurance of faith, having our hearts ſprinkled from an evil conſcience, and our bodies waſhed with pure water.* This is the glory of Goſpel worſhip, and the *beauty* of it; whoſe conſideration whileſt the minds of men are diverted from, to look for beauty in the outward preparation of ceremonies, they loſe the priviledge purchaſed for Believers by the blood

blood of Chriſt. Inſtead then of farthering the *beauty* and *comelineſs* of Goſpel worſhip, they are apt to lead men into a dangerous errour and miſtake, namely that the beauty and excellency of it conſiſts in ſuch things, as upon a due conſideration will appear to be mean and carnal, and far beneath thoſe ceremonies and ordinances of the Old Teſtament which yet in compariſon of the Worſhip of the Goſpel, are called *Worldly*, *carnal*, *beggarly*, and are ſaid to have no glory.

Thirdly, They do not in the leaſt tend unto the preſervation of due *order* in the celebration of divine Worſhip. All *order* conſiſts in the due obſervation of *rule*. The rules of actions are either *natural*, or of his ſpecial appointment. Both theſe take place in religious worſhip; the inſtitutions or commands of Chriſt, containing the ſubſtance thereof, in their obſervation principally conſiſts the order of it. Whatever is of circumſtance in the manner of its performance, not capable of eſpecial determination, as emerging or ariſing only *occaſionally* upon the doing of that which is appointed, at this, or that time, in this, or that place,

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and the like, is left unto the rule of *moral prudence*, in whoſe obſervation their *order* doth conſiſt. But the *ſuper-addition* of ceremonies, neceſſarily belonging neither to the inſtitutions of worſhip, nor unto thoſe circumſtances whoſe diſpoſal falls under the rule of moral prudence, neither doth nor can add any thing unto the *due order* of Goſpel Worſhip. So that they are altogether needleſs, and uſeleſs in the Worſhip of God. Neither is this the whole of the inconvenience wherewith their obſervance is attended; for although they are not in particular, and expreſly in the Scripture *forbidden*, for it was ſimply impoſſible that all inſtances wherein the wit of man might exerciſe its invention in ſuch things, ſhould be reckoned up and condemned, yet they fall directly under thoſe ſevere *prohibitions* which God hath recorded to ſecure his worſhip from all ſuch *additions* unto it, of what ſort ſoever. Yea the main deſign of the *ſecond precept* is to forbid *all making unto our ſelves*, any ſuch things in the worſhip of God, to add unto what he hath appointed, whereof an inſtance is given in that

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of *making and worſhiping Images*, the moſt common way that the ſons of men were then prone to tranſgreſs by, againſt the inſtitutions of God. And this ſenſe and underſtanding of the *commandment* is ſecured by thoſe enſuing prohibitions againſt the adding any thing at all unto the commands of God in his worſhip, Deut. 4. 2. *Ye ſhall not add unto the word which I command you, neither ſhall ye diminiſh ought from it, that ye may keep the commandments of the Lord your God*, Chap. 12. 32. *what things ſoever I command you, obſerve to do it, thou ſhalt not add thereto, nor diminiſh from it*, Chap. 17. 3. to the ſame purpoſe were the places before mentioned, *Matth.* 15. 9. as alſo is that ſevere rule applyed by our Saviour unto the additions of the *Phariſees*, Verſe 13. *Every plant, which my Heavenly Father hath not planted, ſhall be rooted up.*

And there is yet farther evidence contributed unto this intention of the command, from thoſe places where ſuch evils and corruptions, as were particularly forbidden in the worſhip of God, are condemned, not on the ſpecial account of their

their being so forbidden, but on that more general, of being introduced without any warrant from Gods Institutions or commands, Jer. 7. 31. *they have built the high places of* Tophet, *which is in the valley of the Son of* Hinnom *to burn their Sons and their Daughters in the fire, which I commanded not, neither came it into my heart.* Chap. 19. 5. *they have also built the high places of* Baal *to burn their Sons with fire, for burnt-offerings unto* Baal, *which I commanded not, nor spake, neither came it into my mind.* These things were particularly forbidden; but yet God here *condemns* them as coming under the general evil of *making additions* unto his commands, doing that which he commanded not, nor did it ever enter into his heart.

The *Papists* say indeed, that all *additions corrupting* the worship of God are forbidden; but such as farther, adorn, and *preserve* it, are not so; which implyes a contradiction; for whereas every *addition* is principally a *corruption* because it is an *addition*, under which notion it is forbidden, (and that in the worship of God which is forbidden is a

corruption

corruption of it) there can be no such preserving, adorning addition, unless we will allow a preserving and adorning corruption. Neither is it of more force which is pleaded by them, that the additions which they make, belong not unto the *substance* of the worship of God, but unto the *circumstances* of it; for every circumstance observed religiously, or to be observed in the worship of God, is of the substance of it; as were all those *ceremonious observances* of the Law which had the same respect in the prohibitions of adding, with the most weighty things whatsoever.

Qu. 15. *Whence may it appear that the right and due observation of Instituted worship, is of great importance unto the glory of God, and of high concernment unto the Souls of Men?*

Answ. This is fully taught in the Scriptures; as (1) God would never accept in any state of the Church, before or since the fall, moral Obedience without the observation of some institutions as ryals, tokens, and pledges of that obedience. And (2)

in their use and signification by his appointment they nearly concern the principal mysteries of his will and grace. And (3) By their celebration is he glorified in the world: And therefore (4) As he hath made blessed promises to his people, to grant them his presence and to bless them in their use: So (5) Being the tokens of the marriage relation that is between him and them, with respect unto them alone he calls himself a jealous God. And (6) hath actually exercised signal severity towards the neglecters, corrupters or abusers of them. (1) Gen. 2. 16, 17. Gen. 4. 3, 4. Gen. 17. 9, 10, 11. Exod. 12. 24. Exod. 20. Matth. 28. 19, 20. Matth. 26. 26, 27. Eph. 4. 11, 12. Rev. 1. 10. Rev. 21. 3. (2) Gen. 17. 10. Exod. 12. 23, 24. Rom. 6. 3, 4, 5. Matth. 26. 27. 1 Cor. 11. 25, 26. (3) See question the eighth and 27. (4) Exod. 29. 42, 43, 45. Deut. ninth. (5) Matth. 18. 20 Rev. 14. 22. Psal. 133. 3. Deut. 4. 23, 24. 21. 3. (6) Levit. 10. 1. Josh. 24. 19. Ezek. 16. 2. Num. 16. 3, 8, 9, 32, 35. 1 Sam. 2. 28, 29. 2 Sam. 6. 6, 7. 2 Chron. 26. 18, 19 1 Cor. 11. 30.

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Explication.

For the moſt part, the inſtituted worſhip of God is neglected and diſpiſed in the World. Some are utterly regardleſs of it, ſuppoſing that if they attend, after their manner, unto moral obedience, that neither God nor themſelves are much concerned in this matter, of his worſhip. Others think the diſpoſal and ordering of it to be ſo left unto men, that as to the *manner* of its performance, they may do with it as it ſeems right in their own eyes. And ſome follow them therein as willingly walking after their commandments, without any reſpect unto the will or authority of God. But the whole Scripture gives us utterly another account of this matter. The *honour* of God in this world, the *tryal* of our faith and obedience, the *order* and beauty of the Church, the *exaltation* of Chriſt in his profeſſed ſubjection to him, and the *ſaving of our ſouls* in the wayes of his appointment, are therein laid upon the due and right obſervance of inſtituted worſhip, and they who

are negligent about these things, whatever they pretend, have no real respect unto any thing that is called Religion. First therefore, in every state and condition of the Church, God hath given his Ordinances of worship, as the *touchstone* and tryal of its faith and obedience, so that they by whom they are neglected, do openly refuse to come unto Gods tryal. In the state of innocency, the tryal of *Adams* obedience according to the law of nature, was in and by the institution of the trees of life, and of the knowledge of good and evil, *Gen.* 2. 16, 17. *And the Lord God commanded the Man saying, of every tree of the garden thou maist freely eat, but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou, shalt surely die.* This was the first institution of God, and it was given unto the Church, in the state of innocency and purity. And in our first Parents neglect of attending thereunto, did they transgress the whole law of their creation, as failing in their duty in that which was appointment for their

tryal in the whole; Chap. 3. 11. *Hast thou eaten of the tree whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldest not eat?* &c. And the Church in his family after the fall, built upon the promise, was *tryed* also in the matter of instituted worship. Nor was there any discovery of the wickedness of *Cain*, or approbation of the faith of *Abel*, until they came to be proved in their *sacrifices*, a new part of Gods instituted worship, the first in the state and condition of sin and the fall whereinto it was brought. *Gen.* 4. 3, 4, 5. *In process of time, it came to pass Cain brought of the fruit of the ground, an offering unto the Lord, and Abel he also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof; and the Lord had respect unto Abel, and to his offering, but unto Cain, and his offering he had not respect.* The ground whereof the Apostle declares, *Heb.* 11. 4. *By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts.* In the observation of that first institution given to the Church in the state of the fall,

did *Abel* receive a testimony of his being justified and accepted with God. Afterwards when *Abraham* was called, and peculiarly separated to bare forth the name of God in the world, and to become the spring of the Church for future ages, he had the institution of *circumcision* given him for the tryal of his obedience; the Law and condition whereof was, that he who observed it not should be esteemed an alien from the covenant of God, and be cut off from his People. Gen. 17. 9, 10, 11. *God said unto Abraham, thou shalt keep my covenant, thou and thy seed after thee in their generations. This is my covenant which ye shall keep between me and you, and thy seed after thee, every man-child among you shall be circumcised,* Verse the (14) *and the uncircumcised man-child whose flesh of his foreskin is not circumcised, that soul shall be cut off from his people, he hath broken my covenant.* And in like manner so soon as ever his posterity were to be collected into a new Church state and order, God gave them the Ordinance of the *Passover*, Exod. 12. 24. *Ye shall observe*

this thing for an Ordinance to thee and to thy Sons forever, and that upon the ſame penalty with that of circumciſion; to theſe he added many more on mount *Sinai*, *Exod.* 20. all as the tryals of their faith and obedience unto ſucceeding generations: How he hath dealt with his Church under the *new Teſtament*, we ſhall afterwards declare. In no ſtate or condition then of the Church, did God ever accept of *moral Obedience* without the obſervation of ſome inſtituted worſhip accommodated in his wiſdome unto its various ſtates and conditions. And not only ſo, but as we have ſeen, he hath made the obſervation of them according unto his mind and appointment, the means of the tryal of Mens whole obedience, and the ruſe of the acceptance or rejection of them. And ſo it continues at this day, what ever be the thoughts of men about the worſhip which at preſent he requires.

Beſides, God hath appointed that his Ordinances of worſhip ſhall be as *effectual means* as to inſtruct us in the myſteries of his will and mind, ſo of communicating his love, mercy, and grace

unto us; as also of that communion, or intercourse with his holy Majesty, which he hath graciously granted unto us by Jesus Christ. And this as it is sufficiently manifested in the Scriptures quoted in answer unto this question, so it is at large declared in the writings of those holy and good men, who have explained the nature of gospel Ordinances, and therefore in particular we need not here insist much in the farther proof of it. Thus *Abraham* was instructed in the nature of the covenant of grace by *circumcision*, *Gen.* 17. 10. which is often explained in the old Testament, by applying it in particular to the grace of *conversion*, called the *circumcision of the heart*, *Deut.* 10. 16. *Chap.* 30. 6. *Jer.* 4. 4. as also in the new Testament, *Coloss.* 2. 11. And by the *Passover*, where the people taught, not only the mercy of their present deliverance, *Exod.* 12. 23, 24. but also to look for the *Lamb of God* who was to take away the sin of the world, *John* 1. 29. the true *Passover* of the people of God which was sacrificed for them, 1 *Cor.* 5. 7. how our incision or implanting into Christ,

Chriſt, is repreſented and ſignified by our *Baptiſm*, the Apoſtle declares, *Rom.* 6. 3, 4, 5. as alſo our communion with him in his death, by the Supper of the Lord, *Matth.* 26. 27. 1 *Cor.* 11. 25. and all theſe graces which they teach, they alſo *exhibit*, and are the means of the communication of them unto Beleivers. Moreover the experience of all Beleivers, who have conſcientiouſly waited upon God in their due obſervance, may be produced in the confirmation of it. The inſtruction, edification, conſolation, Spiritual ſtrength, courage, and reſolution, which they have received in and by them, hath been witneſſed unto in their lives, and ends; and they to whom theſe things are not of the greateſt importance, do but in vain pretend a regard unto God in any thing whatever.

Farthermore, God hath appointed our duty in the obſervation of his inſtituted worſhip, to be the means of our *glorifying* him in the world. Nor can we otherwiſe give glory to God, but as we own his authority over us, and yield obedience to what he requires at

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our hands. And what we do herein, is principally evident in those duties which lye under the eye and observation of Men. Some duties of obedience there are, which the world neither doth, nor can discern in Believers. Such are their faith, inward holiness, purity of heart, heavenly mindedness, sincere mortification of indwelling sin, some whose performance ought to be hid from them, as personal prayer, and almes, *Matth.* 6. 2, 3, 4, 5, 6. Some there are, which are very liable to misconstruction amongst Men, as *Zeal* in many of the actings of it. But this conscientious observation of instituted worship, and therein avowing our subjection unto the authority of God in Christ, is that which the World may see, and take notice of, and that, which unless in case of persecution, ought not to be hid from them; and that which they can have no pretence of scandal at. And therefore hath God appointed that by this means and way, we shall honour and glorifie him in the World, which if we neglect, we do evidently cast off all regard unto his con-

concernments in this World. Herein it is, that we manifeſt our ſelves not to be aſhamed of the Goſpel of Chriſt, of him and his words, which he ſo indiſpenſably requireth at our hands, *Mark* 8. 38. *For*, ſaith he, *whoſoever ſhall be aſhamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and ſinfull generation, of him alſo ſhall the ſon of Man be aſhamed when he cometh in the glory of his Father, with the holy Angels.* Hereby I do we keep the commandments of Chriſt, as *his freinds*, *John* 13. 35. for theſe peculiarly are *his commands*, and if we ſuffer for them, then we do moſt properly ſuffer as *Chriſtians*, which is our *glory*, that 1 *Pet.* 4. 14, 15, 16. *If ye be reproached for the name of Chriſt, happy are ye; for the ſpirit of glory and of God reſteth upon you, on their part he is evil ſpoken of, but on your part he is glorified, but let none of you ſuffer as a murderer, or as a thief, or as an evil doer, or as a buſibody in other Mens matters, but if any Man ſuffer as a Chriſtian, let him not be aſhamed, but let him gloriſie God on this behalf.* And a happy and a bleſſed

thing

thing it is, to ſuffer for the obſervation of the ſpecial commands of Chriſt.

Farther, to encourage us in our duty, the holy faithful God hath given us many great and precious promiſes, that he will graciouſly afford unto us his eſpecial ſanctifying bleſſing preſence, in our attendance on his worſhip according to his appointment. For as he promiſed of old that he would make glorious the *place of his feet*, or abode amongſt his people, *Iſa.* 60. 13. that he would meet them in *his ſanctuary*, the place of his worſhip, and there dwell amongſt them, and bleſs them, and be their God, *Exod.* 29. 42, 43, 44, 45. *Deut.* 14. 24. ſo the Lord Jeſus Chriſt hath promiſed his preſence to the ſame ends and purpoſes, unto all them that aſſemble together in his name, for the obſervation of the worſhip which in the Goſpel he hath appointed, *Matth.* 18. 20. *For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midſt of them.* And therein is the *tabernacle* of God, his gracious dwelling place, with Men. *Rev.* 21. 3. Now when God offereth unto

us his preſence, his gracious bleſſing, ſanctifying, and ſaving preſence, and that in and by promiſes which ſhall never fail, what unſpeakable guilt muſt we needs contract upon our own ſouls, if we neglect or deſpiſe the tenders of ſuch grace?

But becauſe we are apt to be ſlothful, and are ſlow of heart in admitting a due ſenſe of ſpiritual things that fall not in with the light and principles of nature, to ſtir us up unto a diligence in our attendance unto the will of God in this matter, he hath declared that he looks upon our obedience herein as our *whole loyalty* unto him in that *conjugal covenant* which he is pleaſed in Chriſt Jeſus to take Beleivers into with himſelf, Jer. 3. 14. *turn O backſliding children, ſaith the Lord, for I am marryed unto you, and will take you one of a City, and two of a family, and will bring ye unto Sion, and I will give you Paſtors according unto mine heart, which ſhall feed ye with knowledge and underſtanding.* Coming unto *Sion*, in the worſhip of God, under the leading and conduct of Paſtors according

cording to the heart of God, is our answering the relation wherein we stand unto him as he is *married* unto us, and thereupon he teacheth us that as an *Husband*, he is *jealous* of our discharge of our duty in this matter, accounting our neglect of his worship, or profanation of it by inventions and additions of our own, to be *spiritual disloyalty, whoredome* and adultery, which his soul abhorreth, for which he will cast off any Church, or people, and that for ever, See *Exod.* 20. 5. *Deut.* 4. 23, 24. *Jos.* 24. 19. *Ezek.* 16. whatever he will bear withal in his Church, he will not bear with that which his *jealousie* is exercised about. If it transgress therein, he will give it a bill of divorce, which repudiated condition, is the state of many Churches in the World, however they please, and boast themselves in their *meritricious* ornaments and practices.

To give yet farther strength unto all these considerations, that we may not only have rules and precepts, but examples also for our instruction, God hath given many signal instances of his

severity

severity against persons who by ignorance, neglect, or regardlesness, have miscarried in not observing exactly his will and appointment in and about his worship. This was the case of *Nadab* and *Abihu*, the sons of *Aaron*, *Levit.* 10. 1, 2. of *Corah*, *Dathan* and *Abiram*, *Numb.* 16. 3, 8, 9, 32, 35. of the sons of *Ely*, a sin not to be *expiated with sacrifices and burnt offerings forever*, 1 Sam. 2. 28, 29. of *Uzza* in putting the Ark into a Cart, when he should have born it upon his shoulders, 1 *Chron.* 16. 13. of *Uzziah* the King in offering incense contrary to Gods institution, that duty being appropriated unto the Priests of the posterity of *Aaron*, 2 *Chron.* 26. 16, 19. these are sufficient intimations of what care and diligence we ought to use in attending unto what God hath appointed in his worship, and although now under the new Testament he doth not ordinarily proceed to the inflicting of temporal judgements in the like cases of neglect, yet he hath not wholly left us without instances of his putting forth tokens of his displeasure in temporal visitations

ſitations on ſuch miſcarriages in his Church, 1 Cor. 11. 30. *For this cauſe,* ſaith the Apoſtle, *many are weak, and ſickly among you, and many ſleep.* From all which it appeares of what concernment it is unto the glory of God, and the ſalvation of our own ſouls, to attend diligently unto our duty in the ſtrict and ſincere obſervation of the worſhip of the Goſpel; for he lets us know, that now a more ſevere puniſhment is ſubſtituted againſt ſuch tranſgreſſions in the room of that which he ſo viſibly inflicted under the old Teſtament, *Heb.* 10. 25, 26, 27, 28, 29.

Qu. 16. *Is there yet any other conſideration that may ſtir up Believers to an holy and religious care about the due obſervation of the inſtitutions of the Goſpel?*

Anſw. Yea! namely that the great apoſtacy of the Church in the laſt dayes, foretold in the Scripture, and which God threatneth to puniſh and revenge, conſiſts principally in falſe worſhip, and a departure from the inſtitutions of Chriſt. Rev. 14. 4, 5. Chap. 17. 1, 2, 3, 5.

Explication.

Explication.

That there is an Apostasy of the Church foretold in the book of the Revelations, is acknowledged by all who with sincerity have inquired into the minde of God therein. The state of things at this day, and for many ages past in the World, sufficiently confirm that perswasion. And therein sundry things in general, are obvious unto every sober consideration thereof.

First the horrible evils, troubles and confusions that are to be brought into, and upon the World thereby.

Secondly, the high guilt and provocation of God, that is contained in it, and doth accompany it.

Thirdly, the dreadful vengeance that God in his appointed time will take upon all the promoters and obstinate maintainers of it. These things are at large all of them foretold in the *Revelation*, and therein also the Apostacy it self is set forth as the cause of all the plagues and destructions that by the righteous judgement of God, are

to be brought upon the World in these latter dayes. Now as God doth earnestly call upon all that fear him, not to intermeddle, nor partake in the sins of the *Apostates*, lest they should also partake in their judgements, Chap. 18. 4. (*I heard a voice from Heaven, saying, come out of her my people that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues.*) So he doth plainly declare wherein the apostacy and sin it self should principally consist, and that is in the corrupting and contaminating of the Ordinances of his worship, or the introduction of false worship joyned with the persecution of them who refused to submit thereunto. For this cause, is the sin it self, set out under the name of *fornication*, and *whoredome*; and the Church that maintains it, is called the *Mother of Harlots*, Chap. 17. 5. That by fornication and whoredome, in the Church, the adulterating of the worship of God, and the admission of false self-invented worship in the room thereof, whereof God is jealous, is intended, the Scripture every where declares. It is easie then to

to gather of how great concernment unto us it is, especially in these latter dayes wherein this so haynous and provoking sin is prevalent in the World, carefully to attend unto the safe unerring rule of Worship, and diligently to perform the duties that are required therein.

Quest. 17. *Which are the principal institutions of the Gospel to be observed in the worship of God?*

Answ. (1.) The calling, gathering and setling of Churches with their Officers, as the seat and subject of all other solemn instituted worship. (2.) Prayer with thanksgiving. (3.) Singing of Psalms. (4.) Preaching the word. (5.) Administration of the Sacraments of Baptism, and the Supper of the Lord. (6.) Discipline and rule of the Church collected and setled; most of which have also sundry particular duties relating unto them, and subservient unto their due observation. (1.) Matth. 28. 19, 20. Acts 2. 41, 42. 1 Cor. 12. 28. Ephes. 4. 11, 12. Matth. 18. 17, 18, 19. 1 Cor. 4. 17. 1 Cor. 7. 17.

7. 17. Acts 14. 23. Titus 1. 5. 1 Tim. 3. 1. (2.) 1 Tim. 2. 1. Acts 6. 4. Acts 13. 2, 3. (3.) Ephes. 5. 19. Colos. 3. 16. (4.) 2 Tim. 4. 2. Acts 2. 42. 1 Cor. 14. 3. Acts 6. 2. Heb. 13. 7. (5.) Matth. 28. 19. Matth. 26. 26, 27. 1 Cor. 11. 23. (6.) Matth. 18. 17, 18, 19. Rom. 12. 6, 7, 8. Rev. 2. 3.

Explication.

These things being all of them afterwards to be spoken unto severally and apart, need not here any particular Explication. They are the principal heads wherein *Gospel-worship* consisteth, and whereunto the particular duties of it may be reduced.

Qu. 18. *Whereas [many] of these things are founded in the light and law of nature, as requisite unto all solemn worship, and are moreover commanded in the moral Law, and explications of it in the Old Testament; how do you look upon them as Evangelical institutions to be observed principally on the authority of Jesus Christ?*

Answ.

Answ. Neither their general suitableness unto the principles of right reason, and the dictates of the light and law of nature, nor the practice of them in the worship of God under the Old Testament, do at all hinder them from depending on the mere institution of Jesus Christ, as to those especial ends of the glory of God in and by himself, and the edification of his Church in the faith which is in him, whereunto he hath appointed them; Nor as unto that especial manner of their performance which he requireth, in which respects they are to be observed on the account of his authority and command only, Matth. 17. 5. Matth. 28. 20. John 16. 23, 24. Heb. 3. 4, 5, 6. Ephes. 1. 22. Chap. 2. 20, 21, 22. Heb. 12. 25.

Explication.

The principal thing we are to aim at in the whole worship of God, is the discharge of that duty which we owe to Jesus Christ the King and head of the Church, Heb. 3. 6. *Christ as a Son over his own house, whose house are we.* 1 Tim. 3. 15.

3. 15. *That thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thy self in the house of God, which is the Church of the living God.* This we cannot do unless we consider his authority as the formal reason and cause of our observance of all that we do therein. If we perform any thing in the worship of God on any other account, it is no part of our obedience unto him; and so we can neither expect his grace to assist us, nor have we his promise to accept us therein; for that he hath annexed unto our doing and observing whatever he hath commanded, and that because he hath commanded us, Matth. 28 20. *teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you, and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the World.* This promised presence respects only the observance of his commands. Some men are apt to look on this authority of Christ as that which hath the least influence into what they do. If in any of his institutions they find any thing that is suited or agreeable unto the light of nature, as Ecclesiastical societies, government of the Church, and the like they say are,

they

they suppose and contend, that that is the ground on which they are to be attended unto, and so are to be regulated accordingly. The interposition of his authority they will allow only in the *Sacraments* which have no light in reason or nature, so desirous are some to have as little to do with Christ as they can, even in the things that concern the worship of God. But it would be somewhat strange, that if what the Lord Christ hath appointed in his Church to be observed in particular, in an especial manner, for especial ends of his own, hath in the general nature of it an agreement with what in like cases the light of nature seems to direct unto, that therefore his authority is not to be considered, as the sole immediate reason of our performance of it. But it is evident,

First, That our Lord Jesus Christ being the King and Head of his Church, the Lord over the house of God, nothing is to be done therein, but with respect unto his authority, Matth. 17. 5. *This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased, hear ye him*; Ephes. 4. 15.

Speaking the truth in love, grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ, from whom the whole body fitly joined together, and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of it self in love. Eph. 2. 20, 21. *Ye are built upon the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone, in whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy Temple in the Lord; in whom you also are built together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.*

Secondly, And that therefore, the suitableness or any thing to right reason or the light of nature, is no ground for a Church observation of it, unless it be also appointed and commanded in especial by Jesus Christ.

Thirdly, That being so appointed and commanded, it becomes an especial injunction of his, and as such, is to be observed, so that in all things that are done, or to be done with respect unto the worship of God in the Church, the authority

authority of Christ is alwayes principally to be considered; and every thing to be observed as commanded by him, without which consideration it hath no place in the Worship of God.

Quest. 19. *What is an instituted Church of the Gospel?*

Answ. A society of Persons, called out of the World, or their natural worldly state, by the administration of the Word and Spirit, unto the obedience of the Faith, or the knowledge and Worship of God in Christ, joyned together in an holy band, or by special agreement, for the exercise of the communion of Saints in the due observation of all the Ordinances of the Gospel. Rom. 1. 5. 6. 1 Cor. 1. 2. 1 Cor. 14. 15. Heb. 3. 1. James 1. 18. Rev. 1. 20. 1 Peter 2. 5. Ephes. 2. 21. 22. 23. 2 Cor. 6. 16. 17. 18.

Explication.

The Church, whose nature is here inquired after, is not [illegible] *Catholick* Church

Church of elect Believers of all ages and seasons from the beginning of the World unto the end thereof, nor of any one age, not the *universality* of *professors* of the Gospel; but a *particular* Church wherein by the appointment of Christ, all the Ordinances of the Worship of God are to be observed and attended unto according to his Will. For although it be required of them, of whom a *particular* Church is *constituted*, that they be true Believers, seeing that unless a man be born again, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God, and so on that account they be members of the Church *Catholick*; as also that they make *visible profession* of faith and obedience unto Jesus Christ, yet moreover it is the will, command and appointment of Christ, that they should be joyned together in particular societies, or Churches, for the due observation of the Ordinances of the Gospel, which can alone be done in such Assemblies. For as the members of the Catholick Church, are not known unto one another meerly on the account of that faith and union with Christ which makes them so, whence

whence the whole society of them is, *as such*, *invisible* to the World and themselves, *visible* only on the account of their profession, and therefore cannot meerly as such, observe the Ordinances of the Gospel, which observation is their profession; so the *visible Professors* that are in the World in any age, cannot at any time *assemble* together, which from the nature of the thing it self, and the institution of Christ, is indispensably necessary for the celebration of sundry parts of that worship which he requires in his Church; and therefore particular Churches are themselves an Ordinance of the New Testament, as the *National Church* of the Jews was of old. For when God of old erected his Worship, and enjoyned the solemn observation of it, he also appointed a *Church* as his institution for the due celebration of it. That was, the people of *Israel* solemnly taken into a Church relation with him by covenant, wherein they took upon themselves to observe all the laws, and ordinances, and institutions of his worship, Exod. 20. 19. *Speak*

thou

thou with us, and we will hear. Exod. 24. 3. And Moses came and told the People all the words of the Lord, and all the judgements, and all the people answered with one voice, and said, all the words which the Lord hath said, we will do. Deut. 5. 27. All that the Lord our God shall speak unto thee, we will hear it and do it. And God accordingly appointed them Ordinances to be observed by the whole congregation of them together at the same time, in the same place. Exod. 23. 17. Three times in the year all thy Males shall appear before the Lord thy God. Deut. 16. 16. Three times in a year all thy Males shall appear before the Lord thy God in the place which he shall choose.

Neither would God allow any stranger, any one nor of the Church so instituted by him, to celebrate any part of his instituted worship, until he was solemnly admitted into that Church as a member thereof. Exod. 12. 47, 48. All the congregation of Israel shall keep it, and when a stranger shall sojourn with thee, and will keep the Passover to the Lord, let all his Males be circumcised, and

then

this let him come near and keep it, and he shall be as one that is born in the Land, for no uncircumcised person shall eat thereof.

To the same end and purpose, when the knowledge of God was to be diffused all the World over by the preaching of the Gospel, and Believers of all nations under Heaven were to be admitted unto the priviledge of his worship, Eph. 2. 15, 16, 17, 18. the national Church of the Jewes with all the Ordinances of it being removed and taken away, the Lord Christ hath appointed *particular Churches*, or united Assemblies of Believers, amongst and by whom he will have all his holy Ordinances of worship celebrated. And this institution of his, as the First preaching of the Gospel, was invariably and inviolably observed by all that took on them to be his Disciples, without any one instance of questioning it to the contrary in the whole World, or of the celebration of any Ordinances of his worship amongst any Persons, but only in such societies or particular Churches. And there is sufficient evidence and warranty of this institution

institution given us in the Scripture; For,

First they are appointed and approved by Christ. Matth. 18. 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20. *If thy Brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone, if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy Brother; but if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established; and if he shall neglect to hear, then tell it unto the Church, but if he neglect to hear the Church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican; verily I say unto you, whatsoever ye shall bind on earth, shall be bound in Heaven, and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed also in Heaven; again I say unto you, that if two of you shall agree on earth, as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in Heaven; for where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.*

Such a Church he supposeth and approveth, as his Disciples had relation unto,

unto, and as any one of them could have recourse unto as a Brother, in obedience to his commands and directions. This could not be the *Church* of the Jews neither in its whole body, nor in any of its Judicatories. For as at that time there was a solemn decree of *excommunication* against all and every one that should profess his Name; John 9. 22. *The Jews had already agreed that if any man did confess that he was Christ, he should be put out of the Synagogue*; which was executed accordingly upon the man that was born blind, *Verse* the 34. which utterly disabled them from making any use of this direction, command or Institution of his for the present; So afterwards the chief business of the Rulers of those Assemblies from the highest court of their *Sanhedrim*, to the meanest Judicatory in their *Synagogues*, was to persecute them, and bring them unto death. Math. 10. 17. *They will deliver ye up to the Councils, and they will scourge you in their Synagogues.* John 15. 21. And it is not likely that the Lord Christ would send his Disciples for direction and satisfacti-

on

on in the weighty matters of their obedience unto him, and mutual love towards one another, unto them with whom they neither had, nor could, nor ought to have any thing to do withal; and if they were intended, they were all already made as heathens and Publicans, being cast out by them for refusing to hear them in their blasphemies and persecutions of Christ himself. Such a society also is plainly intended, as whereunto Christ promiseth his presence by his spirit, and whose righteous sentences he takes upon himself to ratifie and confirm in Heaven.

Moreover such a Church doth he direct unto, as with which his Disciples were to have familiar Brotherly constant converse and communion, with whom they were so to be joyned in society, as to be owned or rejected by them according to their judgement, as is apparent in the practice enjoyned unto them; and without relation whereunto no duty here appointed could be performed. As therefore the very name of the *Church*, and nature of the thing, bespeaks a society, so it is evident

dent that no society but that of a particular Church of the Gospel can be here intended.

Secondly, these Churches he calls his *Candlesticks*, Rev. 1. 20. in allusion unto the *Candlesticks* of the Temple, which being an institution of the old Testament, doth directly declare these Churches to be so under the New. And this he speaks in reference unto those *seven principal Churches* of *Asia*, every one of which, was a Candlestick, or an institution of his own.

Thirdly, In pursuit of this appointment of Christ, and by his authority, the Apostles so soon as any were converted unto the faith at *Jerusalem*, although the old National Church state of the *Jews* was yet continued, gathered them into a *Church* or society for celebration of the ordinances of the Gospel. Acts. 2. 41, 42. *they that gladly received the word, were baptised, and they continued stedfastly together in the Apostles doctrine, and fellowship, and in breaking of bread and in prayers.* verse (47) *the Lord adding unto this Church daily such as should be saved.* And this

company is expressly called the *Church at Jerusalem*. *Acts* 8. 1. This Church thus called and collected out of the Church of the *Jewes* was the rule and pattern of the disposing of all the Disciples of Christ into *Church societyes* in obedience unto his command throughout the World. *Acts* 11. 26. *Acts* 14. 23, 27.

Fourthly, they took care for the forming, compleating and establishing them in *order* according to his will, under the rule of them, given and granted unto them by himself for that purpose, and in a steddy pursuit of the commands of Christ. Acts 14. 23. *they ordained them Elders in every Church*. Titus 1. 5. *For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldst set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain Elders in every City, as I had appointed thee*. 1 Cor. 12. 28. Ephes. 4. 11, 12.

Fifthly, they do every where in the Name and authority of Christ, give unto those Churches rules, directions and precepts for the due ordering of all things relating to the worship of God, according to his minde as we shall see afterwards in particular.

First, there is no charge given unto the Officers, Ministers, Guides, or Overseers that he hath appointed, but it is in reference unto the discharge of their duty in such Churches. That Ministers or Officers are of Christs appointment, is expresly declared. Ephes. 4. 11. 12. *He gave some Apostles, some Prophets, some* Evangelists, *some Pastors and Teachers for the perfecting of the Saints, for the work of the Ministery, for the edifying of the body of Christ.* 1 Cor. 12. 28. *God hath set in his Church, first Apostles, secondarily Prophets thirdly Teachers.* These are of Christs institution; but to what end? why, as they were ordained in every Church, *Acts* 14. 23. *Titus* 1. 5. So their whole charge is limited to the *Churches*, Acts 20. 17. *He sent to* Ephesus, *and called the Elders of the Church, and said to them*, Verse the 28. *take heed therefore unto your selves, and to all the flock over which the Holy Ghost hath made you Overseers, to feed the Church of God which he hath purchased with his own blood*, 1 Pet. 5. 2. *The Elders which are among you, I exhort, feed the flock of God, which is among*

gon taking the oversight thereof, 1 Tim. 3. 15) Colos. 4. 17. *And say to* Archippus *take heed to the Ministry which thou hast received in the Lord, that thou fulfill it.* They were the Churches of Christ wherein they ministred, which Christ appointing them to take care of, manifests to be his own institution and appointment. And this is fully declared, *Rev. chap.* 2, 3. where all the dealings of Christ with his *Angels*, or Ministers, are about their behaviour and deportment among his *Candlesticks*, each of them, the Candlestick whereunto he was related, or the particular Churches that they had care of, and presided in; the Candlesticks being no less of the institution of Christ, than the Angels. And they were distinct particular Churches, which had their distinct particular Officers, whom he treateth distinctly withall about his institutions and worship; especially about that of the state of the Churches themselves, and their constitution according to his mind.

Secondly, There is no instruction, exhortation or reproof given unto any of the Disciples of Christ after his ascension,

on, in any of the books of the New Testament, but as they were collected into, and were members of such particular Churches. This will be evidenced in the many instances of those duties that shall afterwards be insisted on. And the Lord Christ hath not left that as a matter of liberty, choice or conveniency, which he hath made the foundation of the due manner of the performance of all those duties whereby his Disciples yield obedience unto his commands, to his glory in the World.

Sixthly, The principal writings of the Apostles are *expresly* directed unto such Churches, and all of them intentionally, 1 *Cor.* 1. 1. 2 *Cor.* 1. 1. *Gal.* 1. 2. *Phil.* 1. 1. *Colos.* 1. 2. *chap.* 4. 16. 1 *Thes.* 1. 1. 2 *Thes.* 1. 1. *Ephes.* 1. 1. compared with *Acts* 20. 17. 1 *Pet.* 5. 2. or unto particular persons, giving directions for their behaviour and duty in such Churches, 1 *Tim.* 3. 15. *Tit.* 1. 5. So that the great care of the Apostles was about these Churches, as the principal institution of Christ, and that whereon the due observance of all his other commands doth depend. Of what nature

or ſort theſe Churches were, ſhall be afterwards evinced; we here only manifeſt their inſtitution by the authority of Chriſt.

Seventhly, Much of the writings of the Apoſtles in thoſe Epiſtles directed to thoſe Churches, conſiſts in rules, precepts, inſtructions, and exhortations for the guidance and preſervation of them in purity, and order, with their continuance in a condition of due obedience unto the Lord Chriſt. To this end do they ſo fully and largely acquaint the Rulers and Members of them with their mutual duty in that eſpecial relation wherein they ſtand to each other, as alſo of all perſons in particular in what is required of them by vertue of their Membership in any particular ſociety; as may be ſeen at large in ſundry of *Paul's* Epiſtles. And to give more ſtrength hereunto, our Lord Jeſus Chriſt in the revelation that he made of his mind and will perſonally after his aſcenſion into Heaven, inſiſted principally about the condition, order and preſervation of particular Churches; not taking notice of any of his Diſciples not belonging to them, or joyned

joyned with them. These he warns, reproves, instructs, threatens, commands, all in order unto their walking before him in the condition of particular Churches, *Rev.* 2. and 3. at large.

Besides, As he hath appointed them to be the seat and *subject* of all his Ordinances, having granted the right of them unto them alone, 1 *Tim.* 3. intrusting them with the exercise of that authority which he puts forth in the rule of his Disciples in this World, he hath also appointed the most holy institution of his *supper* to denote and express that union and communion which the members of each of these Churches have by his Ordinance among themselves, 1 Cor. 10. 17. *The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? the bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? for we being many are one bread and one body, for we are all partakers of that one bread.* And also he gives out unto them the gifts and graces of his spirit, to make every one of them meet for, and useful in that place which he holds in such

Churches as the Apostle discourseth at large, 1 Cor. 12. 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26. verses. Colos. 2. 19. Eph. 4. 16. It is manifest then that no Ordinance of Christ is appointed to be observed by his Disciples, no communication of the gifts of the Holy-Ghost is promised to them, no especial duty is required of them, but with respect unto these Churches of his Institution.

In the Answer to this Question, four things are declared tending to the Explication of the nature of a particular Church or Churches.

(1.) The *subject matter* of them, or the persons whereof such a Church doth or ought to consist. (2.) The *means* whereby they are brought into a condition capable of such an estate, or qualified for it. (3.) The *general ends* of their calling. (4.) The *especial means* whereby they are constituted a Church; which last will be spoken unto in the next Question.

For the first, All men are by nature the children of wrath, and do belong unto the World, which is the Kingdom

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of Satan, and are under the power of darkneſs as the Scripture every where declares. In this ſtate, men are not ſubjects of the Kingdom of Chriſt, nor meet to become members of his Church. Out of this condition, they cannot deliver themſelves. They have neither will unto it, nor power for it, but they are *called* out of it: this *calling* is that which effectually delivers them from the Kingdom of Satan, and tranſlates them into the Kingdom of Chriſt. And this work or effect the Scripture on ſeveral accounts variouſly expreſſeth. Sometimes by Regeneration, or a new birth, ſometimes by *converſion* or turning unto God; ſometimes by *vivification*, or quickening from the dead; ſometimes by *illumination* or opening of the eyes of the blind; all which are carryed on by *ſanctification* in holineſs, and attended with Juſtification and adoption; And as theſe are all diſtinct in themſelves, having ſeveral formal reaſons of them, ſo they all concur to compleat that effectuall vocation or calling that is required to conſtitute perſons members of the Church. For beſides that this is ſignified by

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the typical holineſs of the Church of old, into the room whereof reall holineſs was to ſucceed under the new Teſtament, *Exod.* 19. 6. *Pſal.* 24. 3, 4, 5, 6. *Pſal.* 15. 1, 2. *Iſa.* 35. 8, 9. *Iſa.* 54. 13. *Chap.* 60. 21. 1 *Pet.* 2. 9. our Lord Jeſus Chriſt hath laid it down as an everlaſting rule, that unleſs a man be *born again, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God*, John 3. 3. requiring regeneration as an indiſpenſable condition in a Member of his Church, a ſubject of his Kingdom. For his Temple, is now to be built of living ſtones, 1 *Pet.* 2. 5. Men ſpiritually and ſavingly quickened from their death in ſin and by the Holy Ghoſt, whereof they are partakers, made a meet habitation for God, *Eph.* 2. 21, 22. 1 *Cor.* 3. 16. 2 *Cor.* 6. 16. which receiving vital ſupplyes from Chriſt its head, increaſeth in faith and holineſs, edifying it ſelf in love, *Epheſ.* 4. 15, 16. And as the Apoſtles in their writings, do aſcribe unto all the Churches, and the Members of them a participation in this *effectual* vocation, affirming that they are *Saints, called, ſanctified, juſtified* and accepted with God in Chriſt,

Chriſt, *Rom.* 1. 5, 6. 1 *Cor.* 1. 2. 1 *Cor.* 4. 15. Heb. 3. 1. *Jam.* 1. 18. 1 *Pet.* 2. 5. 2 *Cor.* 6. 17, 18. 1 *Cor.* 6. 11. So many of the duties that are required of them, in that relation and condition, are ſuch, as none can perform unto the glory of God, their own benefit, and the edification of others, (the ends of all obedience) unleſs they are partakers of this effectual calling, 1 *Cor.* 10. 16, 17. 1 *Cor.* 12. 12. *Epheſ.* 4. 16. Add hereunto that theſe Churches and the members of them, are not only commanded to ſeparate themſelves as to their Worſhip of God, from the World, that is men in their worldly ſtate and condition, but are alſo required when any amongſt them traſgreſs againſt the rules and laws of this *holy calling* above deſcribed, to caſt them out of their ſociety and communion, 1 *Cor.* 5. 13. from all which it appears, who are the ſubject matter of theſe Churches of Chriſt; as alſo ſecondly, the means whereby they come to be ſo, namely the adminiſtration of the ſpirit and word of Chriſt; and Thirdly, the general ends of their calling, which are all ſpoken to in this anſwer.

Qu. 20.

Quest. 20. *By what means do persons so called become a Church of Christ?*

Answ. They are constituted a Church, and interested in the rights, power, and privileges of a Gospel-Church, by the will, promise, authority, and law of Jesus Christ, upon their own voluntary consent and engagement to walk together in the due subjection of their Souls and Consciences unto his authority, as their King, Priest and Prophet, and in an holy observation of all his commands, ordinances, and appointments, Matth. 18. 20. Chap. 28. 18, 19. Acts 2. 41, 42. Exod. 24. 3. Deut. 5. 27. Psalm 110. 3. Isa. 44. 5. Chap. 59. 21. Ephes. 4. 7, 8, 9, 10. 2. Cor. 8. 5.

Explication.

That the Lord Christ hath constituted such a Church-state as that which we enquire about, hath been proved already. Unto a Church so constituted, he hath also by his word and promise annexed all those privileges and powers, which we find a Church to be entrusted

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withall. This he hath done by the standing and unalterable Law of the Gospel, which is the Charter of their spiritual society and incorporation. Neither are, nor can any persons be interested in the rights of a Church any otherwise, but by virtue of this Law and constitution. This therefore is first to be laid down, that the sole *moral* foundation of that Church-state which we enquire after, is laid in the Word, Law, and appointment of Christ. He alone hath authority to erect such a society, he is the builder of this house, as well as the Lord over it, *Heb.* 3. 3, 6. neither without it, can all the authority of men in the World appoint such a state, or erect a Church; and all acceptable actings of men herein, are no other but acts of pure obedience unto Christ.

Furthermore, We have declared that the Lord Christ, by the dispensation of his word and spirit, doth prepare and fit men to be subjects of his Kingdom, Members of his Church; the work of sending forth the means of the conversion of the souls of men, of translating them

them from the power of darkneſs into light, he hath taken upon himſelf, and doth effectually accompliſh it in every generation. And by this means he *builds his Church*, Matth. 18. 20. For unto all perſons ſo called, he gives command that they ſhall do and obſerve whatever he hath appointed them to do, *Mat.* 28. 20. in particular, that they profeſs their ſubjection to him, and their obedience, in joyning themſelves in that ſtate wherein they may be enabled to obſerve all his other laws and inſtitutions, with the whole worſhip of God required therein. Being converted unto God by his Word and Spirit, they are to conſider, how they may now obey the Lord Chriſt in all things. Amongſt his commands, this of joyning themſelves in Church ſocieties wherein he hath promiſed his preſence with them, *Matth.* 18. 20. that is to dwell amongſt them by his word and ſpirit, *Iſa.* 59. 21. is the very firſt. This by virtue of that command and promiſe of his they are warranted and enabled to do, nor do they need any other warrant. The authority of Chriſt is ſufficient to bear

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men out in the discharge of their duty to him. Being then made willing and ready in the day of his power, *Psalm* 110. 3. they *consent*, choose, and *agree* to walk together in the observation of all his commands. And hereby do they become a Church. For their becoming a Church, is an act of their willing obedience unto Christ. This obedience is an act of their wills, guided by rule; for this also is necessary that they proceed herein according to the rules of his appointment afterwards to be unfolded. And herein, upon their obedience unto the commands of Christ, and faith in his promises, do Believers by virtue of his Law and constitution, become a Gospel Church, and are really and truly interested in all the power, rights and priviledges, that are granted unto any Church of Christ. For in this obedience they do these two things which alone he requires in any persons for the obtaining of an interest in these priviledges. First, They *confess* him, his person, his authority, his law, his grace. Secondly, They take upon themselves the *observance* of all his commands.

Thus

Thus did God take the children of *Israel* into a Church-state of old. He propoſed unto them the Church obedience that he required of them, and they voluntarily and freely took upon themſelves the performance of it, Exod. 24. 3. *And* Moſes *came and told the people all the words of the Lord, and all the judgements, and all the people anſwered with one voice, and ſaid, all the words which the Lord hath ſaid, will we do.* So *Deut.* 5. 7. and hereby they had their ſolemn admiſſion into their Church-ſtate, and relation unto God. And the like courſe they took when ever there was need of renewing their engagements, Joſh. 24. 18, 21, 22. *And the people ſaid we will ſerve the Lord, for he is our God; and* Joſhua *ſaid unto the people ye are witneſſes againſt your ſelves, that ye have choſen the Lord to ſerve him, and they ſaid we are witneſſes.* This was the *covenant*, that was between God and that people which was ſolemnly renewed, ſo often as the Church was eminently reformed. Now although the outward ſolemnity and ceremonies of this covenant were peculiar unto that

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people, yet as to the ſubſtance and nature of it in a ſacred conſent for the performance of all thoſe duties towards God and one another which the nature and edification of a Church do require, it belongs to every Church as ſuch even under the Goſpel.

And this is the way whereby Beleivers or the Diſciples of Chriſt, do enter into this ſtate, the formal conſtituting cauſe of any Church. This account doth the Apoſtle give of the *Churches* of the *Macedonians*, 2 Cor. 8. 5. *And this they did, not as we hoped but firſt gave their own ſelves to the Lord, and unto us by the will of God.* before the performance of other duties; and in order thereunto, they firſt gave themſelves to the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, or took upon themſelves the obſervance of his commands and inſtitutions, which is the intendment of that expreſſion. Among theſe commands one was that they ſhould give up themſelves to the Apoſtles doctrine, Rule and government in the order by Chriſt preſcribed, that is in Church order. This therefore they did *by the will of God*, according to his

will, and appointment. This description doth the Apostle give of the way whereby the Believers of *Macedonia* were brought into Churches. It was by their own obedience unto the will of God, consenting, agreeing, and taking upon themselves the observation of all the commands and institutions of Christ, according to the direction and guidance of the Apostles. So did the Believers at *Jerusalem*, *Acts* 2. 41, 42. Being converted by the word, and making profession of that conversion in their Baptism, they gave up themselves to a stedfast continuance in the observation of all other Ordinances of the Gospel.

Besides the Church is an house, a Temple, the *house of God*, 1 Tim. 3. 15. The *house* of Christ, *Heb.* 3. 6. The Temple of God, *Ephe.* 2. 21, 22. Believers singly considered are *stones*, living stones, 1 *Peter* 2. 5. Now how shall these *living stones* come to be an house, a Temple? can it be by occasional occurrences, civil cohabitation in political precincts, usage or custome of assembling for some parts of worship

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in any place? theſe things will never frame them into a houſe or Temple. This can be no otherwiſe done but by their own voluntary conſent and diſpoſition. Ephe. 2. 19, 20, 21, 22. *Ye are fellow-Citizens with the Saints, and of the houſehold of God, and are built upon the foundation of the Apoſtles and Prophets, Jeſus Chriſt himſelf being the chief corner ſtone, in whom all the building fitly framed together, groweth unto an holy Temple, in the Lord; in whom you alſo are builded together for an habitation of God through the ſpirit.* Chap. 4. 16. *From whom the whole body fitly joyned together, and compacted by that which every joynt ſupplyeth, according to the effectual working in the meaſure of every part maketh increaſe of the body unto the edifying of it ſelf in love.* From theſe and ſundry other places, it is manifeſt, that the way and means of Believers coalition into a Church-ſtate, is their own obedience of faith, acting it ſelf in a joynt voluntary conſent to walk together in an holy obſervation of the commands of Chriſt, whence the being and union of a particular Church is gi-

ven unto any convenient number of them by his Law and constitution.

Qu. 21. *Seeing the Church is a society or spiritual incorporation of persons under rule, government or Discipline, declare who or what are the rulers, governors or Officers therein under Jesus Christ?*

An. They have been of two sorts (1) extraordinary appointed for a season only, and (2) ordinary to continue unto the end of the World.

Qu. 22. *Who are the extraordinary Officers or Rulers or Ministers of the Church appointed to serve the Lord Jesus Christ therein for a season only?*

An. (1) The Apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ, with (2) the Evangelists and Prophets indowed with extraordinary gifts of the holy Ghost, associated with them, and employed by them in their work and Ministry. (1) Matth. 10. 2, 3. Acts 1. 26. 1 Cor. 12. 28. Ephe. 4. 11. (2) Luke 10. 1. 2 Tim. 4. 5. Titus. 1. 5. Acts 11. 27, 28. Acts 21. 9, 10, 11. 2. Cor. 1. 1.

Explication

Explication.

That the Church is a *Spiritual corporation*, attended with rule and government, is evident from the nature of the thing it ſelf and teſtimonies of Scripture. Only as the Kingdome of Chriſt is not of this World, or Worldly, ſo this rule and government of the Church is not mearly external, and ſecular, but ſpiritual. Neither doth this rule at all belong unto it, merely as *materially* conſidered, in men yielding obedience unto the call which is the foundation of the Church, nor *abſolutly* as it is formally conſtituted a Church by the conſent and agreement deſcribed, but moreover it is required that it be *organically* compleat with Officers or rulers; now to the conſtitution of ſuch a ſociety or corporation there is required.

Firſt, that the perſons whereof it is conſtituted do *conſent* together into it for the attaining of the ends which they deſign. Without this no ſociety of any kind can exiſt. This is the form of mens coaleſcencie into ſocietyes. And

that there is in the Church such a consent and agreement hath been shewed.

Secondly, that there be Rules or Laws for the guidance and direction of all the Members of the society, in order to their pursuit of the proper ends of it. That such Rules or Lawes are given and prescribed by the Lord Christ unto the Church, will afterwards appear in our consideration of them in particular, so that the Church is a society of men walking according unto Rule or Law for the attaining of the ends of the society.

Thirdly, that there be Authority instituted for to see to the due Observation of these Rules and Lawes of the society, which consists in this; (1) That some be appointed to *Rule* and Govern in the Church. (2) Others, to *Obey* and be Ruled or Governed; both according to the Laws of the society and not otherwise. And both these are eminently found in this Church-state as we shall see in the ensuing Question with their Answers and Explications.

Now that these Officers, or Rulers, should be of two sorts, both the nature

ture of the thing it self required, and so hath our Lord Jesus Christ appointed. For when the Church was first to be called, gathered, and erected, it was necessary that *some Persons* should be *extraordinarily* employed in that work, for *ordinary* Officers, antecedent unto the calling and erection of the Church, there could be none. And therefore these persons were in an *extraordinary* manner endowed with all that power which afterwards was to reside in the Churches themselves, and moreover with that, which was peculiarly needful unto the discharge and performance of that special duty and work that they were appointed unto. But when Churches were called, gathered, erected, and setled for continuance, there was need of Officers suited to their state and condition, called in an *ordinary* way, that is in a way appointed for continuance unto the end of the World, and so to be employed in the *ordinary* work of the Church, that is the duties of it, which were constantly incumbent on it by virtue of the command and appointment of Christ.

Quest. 23. *Who are the ordinary Officers or Ministers of Christ in the Church to be always continued therein?*

Answ. Those whom the Scripture calls, Pastours and Teachers, Bishops, Elders, and Guides, Acts 14. 23. Acts 20. 17, 18. 1 Cor. 12. 28. Ephes. 4. 11. Phil. 1. 1. 1 Tim. 3. 1, 2. chap. 5. 17. Titus 1. 5, 7. Heb. 13. 7, 17. 1 Pet. 5. 1.

Explication.

Several names, are on several accounts, partly designing their authority, partly their duty, and partly the manner of their discharge thereof, assigned in the Scripture to the ordinary Ministers of the Churches. Sometimes they are called *Pastors* and *Teachers*, Ephes. 4. 11. 1 Cor. 12. 28. Sometimes *Bishops* or *Overseers*, Phil. 1. 1. Act. 20. 28. Titus 1. 5. Sometimes *Elders*, 1 Pet. 5. 1. 1 Tim. 5. 17. Act. 14. 23. Act. 20. 17. Sometimes *Guides*, Heb. 13. 7, 17. By all which names, and sundry others whereby they are expressed, the same sort, order, and degree of persons is intended. Nor is any one of these names applyed

or accommodated unto any, but all the reſt are alſo in like manner; ſo that he who is a *Paſtor* or a Teacher, is alſo a *Biſhop* or *Overſeer*, a *Preſbyter* or *Elder*, a *Guide* or *Ruler*, a *Miniſter*, a ſervant of the Church for the Lords ſake. And of all other names aſſigned to the Miniſters of the Church, that of *Biſhop*, can leaſt of all be thought to have deſigned any ſpecial order or degree of preheminence amongſt them. For whereas it is but four times, or in four places uſed in the New Teſtament as denoting any officers of the Church, in each of them it is manifeſt, that thoſe expreſſed by the other names of Elders and Miniſters are intended. So *Act.* 20. 28. the *Biſhops* are the *Elders* of the particular Church of *Epheſus* verſe the 17. *Phil.* 1. 1. there were *many Biſhops* in that one particular Church, who had only *Deacons* joyned with them; that is they were the Elders of it. *Tit.* 1. 8. the *Biſhops* were the *Elders* to be ordained *verſ.* the 5. which perſons are alſo directly intended, 1 *Tim.* 3. 2. as is evident from the coincidence of the directions given by the Apoſtle about them, and the immediate adjoyning

adjoyning of *Deacons* unto them *vers.* 8. So that no name could be fixed on with leſs probability to aſſert from it a ſpecial ſupream order or degree of men in Miniſtry, than this of Biſhops. Neither is there any mention in any place of Scripture, of any ſuch preheminence of one ſort of theſe Church-Officers or Miniſters over another; not in particular in thoſe places where the Officers of the Church are in an eſpecial manner enumerated, as 1 *Cor.* 12. 28. *Eph.* 4. 11. *Rom.* 12. 5, 6, 7, 8. Nor is there any mention of any ſpecial *office* that ſhould be peculiar unto ſuch Officers, or of any gifts or qualifications that ſhould be required in them, or of any ſpecial way of calling or ſetting apart to their office, nor of any kind of Church that they ſhould relate unto, different from the Churches that other Elders or Paſtors do Miniſter in, nor of any ſpecial rule or direction for their tryal, nor any command for obedience unto them, but what are common to all Miniſters of the Churches of Chriſt duly diſcharging their truſt, and performing their duty; no intimation is given unto either

either Elders or Miniſters to obey them; or directions how to reſpect them; nor unto them how to behave themſelves towards them; but all theſe things are ſpoken and delivered promiſcuouſly and equally concerning all Miniſters of the Goſpel. It is evident then that theſe appellations do not belong unto one ſort of Miniſters, not one more than another; and for what is pleaded by ſome, from the example of *Timothy* and *Titus*, it is ſaid, that when any perſons can prove themſelves to be *Evangeliſts*, 1 Tim. 4. 5. to be called unto their office upon antecedent *prophecy*, 1 Tim. 1. 18. and to be ſent by the Apoſtles, and in an eſpecial manner to be directed by them in ſome employment for a ſeaſon, which they are not ordinarily to attend unto, *Titus* 1. 5 *Chap.* 3. 12. It will be granted that they have another duty and office committed unto them, than thoſe who are only Biſhops or Elders in the Scripture.

Queſt. 24. *What are the principal differences between theſe two ſorts of Officers or Rulers in the Church, extraordinary and ordinary?* Anſw.

Answ. (1.) The former were called to their office immediately by Jesus Christ in his own Person, or revelation made by the Holy-Ghost in his name to that purpose; the latter by the suffrage, choice and appointment of the Church it self. (2.) The former both in their Office and work, were independant on, and antecedent unto all or any Churches, whose calling and gathering depended on their office as its consequent and effect; the latter, in both consequent unto the calling, gathering and constituting of the Churches themselves, as an effect thereof, in their tendency unto compleatnes and perfection. (3.) The authority of the former being communicated unto them immediately by Jesus Christ without any intervenient actings of any Church, extended it self equally unto all Churches whatever: that of the latter being derived unto them from Christ by the election and designation of the Church, is in the exercise of it, confined unto that Church wherein and whereby it is so derived unto them. (4.) They differ also in the gifts which were

were suited unto their several distinct works and employments. (1) Matth. 10. 2. Luke 16. 1. Gal. 1. 1. Acts 1. 26. Acts 6. 3. Acts 14. 23. (2) Joh. 20. 21, 22, 23. Gal. 1. 1. Ephes. 2. 20. Rev. 21. 14. Acts 14. 23. Titus 1. 5, 7. (3) Matth. 28, 18, 19, 20. 2 Cor. 11. 28. Act. 20. 28. 1 Pet. 1. 2. Colos. 4. 17. (4) 1 Cor. 12. 28, 29, 30. The Answer hereunto is such as needs no further Explication.

Quest. 25. *What is required unto the due constitution of an* Elder, *Pastor or Teacher of the Church?*

Answ. (1) That he be furnished with the gifts of the Holy Spirit for the edification of the Church, and the Evangelical discharge of the work of the Ministry. (2) That he be unblameable, holy, and exemplary in his conversation. (3) That he have a willing mind to give up himself unto the Lord in the work of the Ministry. (4) That he be called and chosen by the suffrage and consent of the Church. (5) That he be solemnly set apart by fasting and prayer and imposition of

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hands unto his Work and Ministry. (1) Ephes. 4. 8, 11, 12, 13. (2) Titus. 1. 7, 8, 9. 2 Tim. 3. 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7. (3) 1 Pet. 5. 2, 3. (4) Acts 14. 23. (5) Acts 13. 2. 1 Tim. 5. 22. 1 Tim. 4. 14.

Explication.

Five things are here said to be required unto the due and solemn constitution of a Minister, Guide, Elder, Pastor, or Teacher of the Church; which as they do not all equally belong unto the *essence* of the call, so they are all indispensably necessary unto him that would be accounted to have taken that office upon him according to the mind of Christ, and they are plainly expressed in the Scripture.

The First is, that they be furnished with *the gifts* of the Holy-Ghost, for the discharge of the Ministry. The communication of the *gifts* of the Holy-Ghost, is the foundation of the Ministry, as the Apostle declares, Ephes. 4. 7, 8, 11, 12, 13. *But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure*

ſure of the gift of Chriſt, wherefore he ſaith, when he aſcended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto Men, and he gave ſome Apoſtles, and ſome Prophets, and ſome Evangeliſts, and ſome Paſtors and Teachers, for the perfecting of the ſaints, for the work of the Miniſtry, for the edifying of the body of Chriſt, till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man. And if this were not continued, if the Lord Chriſt did not continue to give *gifts* unto men for that end, the miniſtry muſt and would ceaſe in the Church; and all Church order and adminiſtrations thereon. The exerciſe alſo of the gifts, is required in all them that are called unto ſacred office, 1 Tim. 4. 14. *Neglect not the gift that is in thee.* Hence perſons deſtitute of theſe gifts of the ſpirit, as they cannot in a due manner diſcharge any one duty of the Miniſtry, ſo wanting an intereſt in that which is the foundation of the Office, are not eſteemed of God as Miniſters at all, whatever their outward call may be, Hoſea 4. 6. *Becauſe thou haſt rejected knowledge, I will*

alſo

also reject thee, that thou shalt be no Priest to Me.

Secondly, Their unblameableness and holiness of conversation is previously required in them that are to be set apart unto the Ministry. This the Apostle expressly declares, and layes down many particular instances whereby it is to be tryed, Tit. 1. 7, 8, 9. *For a Bishop must be blameless, as the steward of God, not self-willed, not soon angry, not given to wine, no striker, not given to filthy lucre, but a lover of hospitality, a lover of good men, sober, just, holy, temperate, holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and convince the gainsayers,* 1 Tim. 3, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7. *A Bishop must be blameless, the husband of one Wife, vigilant, sober, of good behaviour, given to hospitality, apt to teach, not given to wine, no striker, not greedy of filthy lucre, but patient, not a brawler, nor covetous, one that ruleth well his own house, having his Children in subjection with all gravity; for if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the Church of God? not a Novice, lest being*

being lifted up with pride, he fall into the condemnation of the Devil; moreover he must have a good report of them which are without, least he fall into reproach, and the snare of the Devil. Not that the particulars here mentioned by the Apostle are only to be considered in the conversation of the person to be called to the Ministry, but that in an universal holy conversation these things he requires that he should be eminent in amongst Believers, as those which have an especial respect to his work and office. And a failure in any of them, is a just cause or reason to debar any person from obtaining a part and lot in this matter. For whereas the especial end of the Ministry, is to promote and farther faith and holiness in the Church, by the edification of it, how unreasonable a thing would it be, if men should be admitted unto the work of it, who in their own Persons were strangers both unto faith and holiness. And herein are the Elders of the Churches seriously to exercise themselves unto God, that they may be an example unto the flock, in an universal

labouring after conformity in their lives unto the great Bishop and Pastour of the Church, our Lord Jesus Christ.

Thirdly, It is required that such a person have a *willing mind* to give up himself unto God in this work, 1 Pet. 5. 2, 3. *The Elders which are among you, I exhort, feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly, not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; neither as being Lords over Gods heritage, but being Ensamples to the flock.* Willingness and readiness of mind, are the things here required as a previous qualification unto any mans susception of this Office; and two things doth the *Apostle* declare to be contrary hereunto.

First, The undertaking of it by *constraint*, which compriseth every antecedent external impression upon the mind of the undertaker; such are personal outward necessities, compulsions of Friends and relations, want of other wayes of subsistance in the World; all which and the like are condemned by the Apostle as bring some *constraint* on the

the mind, which on other accounts ought to be free and willing; as also all *ungivenesse* and backwardnesse in persons duly qualified and called, on the consideration of difficulties, temptations, streights, persecutions, is here condemned.

Secondly, an eye and regard unto *filthy lucre* or profit in the World, is proposed as opposite unto the *readinesse of mind* which is required in them that are called to this work. An aim in this employment for men by it to advantage themselves in the outward things of this world, without which, it is evident that the whole work and Office would lye neglected by the most of them who now would be accounted partakers of it, is openly here condemned by the Apostle.

Fourthly, *Election* by the suffrage and consent of the Church is required unto the calling of a Pastor or Teacher, so that without it formally, or virtually given or obtained, the call however otherwise carryed on or solemnized, is irregular and defective. There are but two places in the New Testament where

there is mention of the *manner* whereby any are called in an *ordinary* way unto any ministery in the Church; and in both of them there is mention of their *election* by the community of the Church; and in both of them the Apostles themselves presided with a fulness of Church power, and yet would not deprive the Churches of that which was their liberty and priviledge. The first of these is *Acts* the 6. where all the Apostles together, to give a rule unto the future proceeding of all Churches in the constitution of Officers amongst them, do appoint the *multitude of the Disciples* or community of the Church, to look out from among themselves, or to choose the persons that were to be set apart thereon unto their office, which they did accordingly, Verses 2, 3, and 5. *Then the twelve called the multitude of the Disciples unto them, and said, it is not reason that we should leave the word of God, and serve Tables; wherefore Brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost, and wisdom; and the saying pleased the whole multitude, and they chose* Stephen,

phen, &c. This was done when only *Deacons* were to be ordained, in whom the interest and concernment of the Church is not to be compared with that which it hath in its *Pastors*, *Teachers*, and *Elders*. The same is mentioned again, *Acts* 14. 23. where *Paul* and *Barnabas* are said to ordain Elders in the Churches by their election and suffrage. For the word there used, will admit of no other sence, however it be ambiguously expressed in our translation. Neither can any instances be given of the use of that word, applyed unto the communication of any office or power to any person or persons in an assembly wherein it denoteth any other action but the suffrage of the multitude; and this it doth constantly in all writers of the Greek tongue. And hence it was that this right and privilege of the Church in choosing of those who are to be set over them in the work of the Lord, was a long time preserved inviolate in the primitive Churches, as the ancients do abundantly testify. Yea the shew and appearance of it could never be utterly thrust out of the World, but is still re-

tained in those Churches which yet reject the thing it self. And this institution of our Lord Jesus Christ by his Apostles, is suited to the nature of the Church, and of the authority that he hath appointed to abide therein. For as we have shewed before, persons become a Church by their own voluntary consent. Christ makes his subjects willing, not slaves: His rule over them is by his grace in their own wills; and he will have them every way free in their obedience. A Church-state is an estate of absolute liberty under Christ, not for men to do what they will, but for men to do their duty freely, without compulsion. Now nothing is more contrary to this liberty, than to have their Guides, Rulers, and Overseers impos'd on them without their consent. Besides, the body of the Church is obliged to discharge its duty towards Christ in every institution of his, which herein they cannot, if they have not their free consent in the choice of their Pastors or Elders, but are considered as mere persons, or brute creatures. Neither is there any other ordinary way of communicating

municating authority unto any in the Church, but by the voluntary submission and subjection of the Church it self unto them. For as all other imaginable wayes may fail and have done so, where they have been trusted unto, so they are irrational, and unscriptural, as to their being a means of the delegation of any power whatever.

Fifthly, Unto this election succeeds the solemn *setting apart* of them that are chosen by the Church unto this work and ministry, by fasting, prayer, and imposition of the hands of the *Presbytery*, before constituted in the Church wherein any person is so to be set apart.

Qu. 26. *May a Person be called to, or be employed in a part only of the Office or work of the Ministry*, or may he hold the relation and exercise the duty of an *Elder* or *Minister* unto more Churches than one at the same time?

Answ. Neither of these have either warrant or precedent in the Scriptures; nor is the first of them consistent with the authority of the Ministry, nor the latter with the duty thereof, nor either

of them with the nature of that relation which is between the Elders and the Church, Acts 14. 23. 1 Pet. 5. 2. Acts 20. 28.

Explication.

There are two parts of this Question and Answer, to be spoken unto severally. The First is concerning a person to be called or employed in any Church, in a part only of the office or work of the Ministry. As suppose a Man should be called or chosen by the Church to administer the Sacraments, but not to attend to the work of Preaching; or unto the rule or guidance of the Church; or in like manner unto any other part or parcell of the work of the Ministry, with an exemption of other duties from his charge or care. If this be done by consent, and agreement, for any time or season, it is unwarrantable and disorderly; (what may be done *occasionally* upon an emergency, or in case of weakness or disability befalling any *Elder* as to the discharge of any part of his duty, is not here enquired after.) For,

First,

First, If the Perſon ſo called or employed have received gifts fitting him for the whole work of the Miniſtry, the exerciſe of them is not to be reſtrained by any conſent or agreement; Seeing they are given for the edification of the Church to be traded withall, 1 Cor. 12. 7. *The manifeſtation of the Spirit, is given to every man to profit withall*; and this he which hath received ſuch gifts, is bound to attend unto, and purſue.

Secondly, If he have not received ſuch gifts as compleatly to enable him unto the diſcharge of the whole work of the Miniſtry in the Church wherein he is to adminiſter, it is not lawful for the Church to call him unto that work wherein the Lord Chriſt hath not gone before them in qualifying him for it. Yea to do ſo, would be moſt irregular, for the whole power of the Church, conſiſts in its attendance unto the rule given unto it. And therefore the office and work of the Miniſtry being conſtituted by the Law of Chriſt, it is not in the power of the Church to enlarge or ſtreighten the power or duty of any one that is called unto the office thereof.

Neither

Neither can or ought any person that is called unto the worke of the Ministry to give his consent to the restraint of the exercise of that gift that he hath received, in a due and orderly manner, not to the abridgement of the authority which the Lord Christ hath committed unto the Ministers of the Gospel.

As it is incumbent upon them to take care to preserve their whole authority, and to discharge their whole duty, so that arbitrary constitutions of this nature are irregular, and would bring in confusion into Churches.

The second part of the *Question* is, concerning the Relation of the same person to more Churches than one, at the same time, and his undertaking to discharge the duty of his relation unto them, as an *Elder* or Minister. And this also is irregular and unwarrantable.

Now a man may hold the relation of an *Elder*, *Pastor*, or Minister unto more Churches than one two wayes. First, *formally* and directly, by an equal formal interest in them, undertaking the pastoral charge equally and alike of them, being called alike to them and accepting

accepting of such a relation, (2) virtually; when by virtue of his relation unto one Church he puts forth his power or authority in Ministerial acts in, or towards another. The First way is unlawful, and destructive both of the Office and duty of a Pastor. For as *Elders* are ordained in, and unto the Churches respectively that they are to take care of; *Acts* 14. 23. *Tit.* 1. 5. And their office power consists in *a relation* unto the Church that they are set over, so they are commanded to attend unto the service of the Churches wherein, and whereunto, they are so ordained. *Act.* 20. 28. 1 *Peter* 1. 2. And that with all diligence care and watchfulness, as those that must give an account, *Heb.* 13. 17. which no man is able to do towards more Churches than one, the same duty being at all times to be performed towards all. And because the whole authority of the Elders, Pastors, or Bishops of Churches, is ministerial, 1 *Cor.* 4. 1. consisting in a power of acting upon the command of Christ they are bound in their own persons to the discharge of their duty

and

and Office, without the least pretence of authority to *delegate* another, or *others*, to act their part or to do their duty, which would be an effect of *autocratorical* authority, and not of obedience or Ministry. The latter way also of relation unto many Churches is unwarrantable; For (1) It hath no warrant in the Scripture, no Law, nor constitution of Christ, or his Apostles, can be produced to give it countenance; but Elders were ordained to their own Churches, and commanded to attend unto them. (2) No *rule* is given unto any Elders how they should behave themselves in reference unto more Churches than one, in the exercise of their ministerial power, as there are rules given unto every one for the discharge of that duty in the Church whereunto he is related. (3) There is no *example* to give it countenance recorded in the Scripture. (4) The authority to be put forth hath no foundation. (1) Not in the *gifts* they have received, for the *ministerial power* is not an absolute ability or faculty of doing what a man is able, but a *right* whereby a

man

man hath power to do that *rightly* and *lawfully*, which before he could not do. This, gifts will not give to any; for if they did, they would do it to all that have received them. (2) Not in their *election*, for they are chosen in and by that Church whereunto they stand in especial relation, whose choice cannot give ministerial power over any but themselves. (3) Not in their *setting apart* by fasting, prayer, and imposition of hands, for this is only unto that office, work, and power, whereunto they are chosen. They are not chosen for one end, and set apart for another. (4) Not from the Communion of Churches, for that gives no new power, but only a due exercise of that which was before received.

Qu. 27. *What are the principal duties of the Pastors or Teachers of the Church?*

An. (1) To be examples unto the flock in faith, love, knowledge, meekness, patience, readiness to suffer for the name and Gospel of Christ, with constancy therein. (2) To watch for the souls, and take care of all the

spiritual

spiritual concernments of the whole flock committed to them. (3) To preach the word diligently, dividing it aright. (4) To preserve and contend for the truth. (5) To administer all the Ordinances of the Gospel duly and orderly. (6) To stir up and exercise the gifts they have received in the discharge of their whole work and administration of all Ordinances. (7) To instruct, admonish, cherish, and comfort all the Members of the Church as their conditions, occasions and necessities do require. (8) To attend with diligence, skill and wisdome unto the discharge of that authority which in the rule of the Church is committed unto them. (1) 1 Tim. 3. 10, 11, 13. Chap. 4. 12. 2 Tim. 2. 3. Colos. 1. 24. Phil. 2. 17. Chap. 3. 17. (2) Heb. 13. 17. Acts 20. 28. (3) 2 Tim. 2. 15. 2 Tim. 4. 2. Rom. 12. 6, 7, 8. (4) 1 Tim. 6. 20. Acts, 20. 28. Jude 3. (5) 1 Cor. 4. 1, 2. 1 Tim. 3. 15. (6) 1 Tim. 4. 14, 15, 16. (7) Acts 20. 18, 19, 20, 25, 26. 1 Thes. 3. 5. 2 Tim. 2. 24, 25. (8) Rom. 12. 8. 1 Tim. 5. 17.

The answer is full and plain.

Qu. 28.

Qu. 28. *Wherein principally doth the authority of the Elders of the Church consist?*

An. (1) In that the Rule of the Church and the guidance thereof in things appertaining unto the worship of God, is committed unto them. And therefore (2) Whatever they do as Elders in the Church according unto rule, they do it not in the name or authority of the Church by which their power is derived unto them, nor as Members only of the Church by their own consent or covenant, but in the name and authority of Jesus Christ, from whom by virtue of his Law and Ordinance their ministerial office and power is received, so that (3) In the exercise of any act of Church power, by and with the consent of the Church, there is an obligation thence proceeding, which ariseth immediately from that authority which they have received of Jesus Christ, which is the spring of all rule and authority in the Church. (1) Acts 20. 28. Heb. 13. 7, 17. 1 Pet. 5. 2. 1 Cor. 12. 28. (2) 1 Tim. 3. 5.

5. 5. Coloss. 4. 17. 2 Cor. 10. 4, 8. (3) 1 Tim. 4. 11. Titus 2. 15. 1 Peter 1. 2, 3, 4, 5.

Explication.

The answer unto this Question explains the *power* or *authority* of the Elders of the Church, from whom they do receive it, and how it is exercised by them; the right stating whereof is of great importance in the whole discipline of the Church, and must therefore here be farther explained: to this end we may consider,

First, that all Church power is *originally* vested in Jesus Christ the sole head, and Monarch thereof. God the Father hath committed it unto him, and intrusted him with it for the accomplishment of his work of mediation, *Matth.* 28. 18.

Secondly, that he doth communicate of this authority by way of trust, to be exercised by them in his name, unto persons by him appointed, so much as is needful for the ordering and disposing of all things in his Churches, unto the blessed ends for which he hath instituted

instituted and appointed them. For no man can have any power in his Church for any end whatever, but by *delegation* from him. What is not received from him, is meer usurpation. And whoever takes upon himself the exercise of any Rule, or Authority, or power in the Church, not granted unto them by him, or not rightly derived from him, is an oppressor, a thief, and a Robber, this necessarily follows upon the absolute investiture of all power in him alone, 1 *Cor.* 12. 28. *Ephe.* 4. 11, 12.

Thirdly, the means whereby the Lord Christ communicates this power unto men, is by his *Law*, and constitution, whereby he hath granted, ordained, and appointed, that such and such powers shall be exercised in his Church, and that by such and such persons, to be derived unto them in such a way and manner; so that the word of the Gospel, or the Laws and constitutions of the Lord Christ therein, are the first recipient seat and subject *morally* of all Church power whatever. *Matth.* 16. 19. *Matth.* 18. 18, 19, 20.

Fourthly, the way and means where-

by any persons come to a participation of this power regularly, according to the mind of Christ, is by the obedience unto, and due observation of his laws and commands, in them unto whom they are prescribed. As when an Office, with the power of it, is constituted and limited by the law of the Land, there is no more required to invest any man in that office, or to give him that power, than the due observance of the means and way prescribed in the law to that end. The way then, whereby the *Elders* of the Church do come to participate of the power and authority which Christ hath appointed to be exercised in his Church, is by their, and the Churches due observance of the Rules and Laws given by him for their election, and setting apart unto that office. *Heb.* 4. 3. *Acts* 14.24.

Fifthly, on this account they receive their power from Christ himself alone, and that immediately; for the means used for their participation of it, are not *recipient* of the power it self *formally*, nor do authoritatively collate or conferr it, only the laws of Christ are executed

executed in a way of obedience. So that though they are chosen and set apart to their office by the *Church*, yet they are *made Overseers by the holy Ghost*, *Acts* 20. 28. Though they have their power by the Church, yet they have it not from the Church; nor was that power whereof they are made partakers (as was said) *formally* resident in the body of the Church, before their participation of it; but *really* in Christ himself alone, and *morally* in the word or law. And thence is the rule and guidance of the Church committed unto them by Christ, *Heb.* 13. 7, 17. 1 *Pet.* 5. 2. 1 *Tim.* 3. 5.

Sixthly, this authority and power thus received from Christ, is that which they exert and put forth in all their ministerial administrations, in all which they do as ministers in the house of God, either in his worship, or in the rule of the Church it self. They exercise that authority of Christ, which he hath in his law appointed to be exercised in his Church; and from that authority is due order given unto the administration of all the ordinances of

worship; and an obligation unto obedience to acts of rule doth thence also ensue; so that they which despise them, despise the authority of Christ.

Seventhly, when as Elders they do, or declare any thing in the name of the Church, they do not, *as such*, put forth any authority committed unto them from and by the Church, but only declare the *consent* and determination of the Church in the exercise of their own liberty and priviledge; but the authority which they act by, and which they put forth, is that which is committed to themselves *as such* by Jesus Christ.

Eighthly, this authority is comprised in the Law and constitution of Christ which themselves exert only *ministerially*; and therefore when ever they act any thing *authoritatively*, which they are not enabled for, or warranted in by the word of the Gospel, or do any thing without, or contrary unto rule, all such actings as to any spiritual effect of the Gospel, or obligation on the consciences of Men, are *Ipso facto null*, and are no way ratified in Heaven, where all their orderly actings are made valid; that

that is, by Christ himself in his Word.

Ninthly, The reason therefore why the *consent* of the Church is required unto the *authoritative* acting of the Elders therein, is not because from thence any *authority* doth accrew unto them anew, which virtually and radically they had not before; but because by the rule of the Gospel this is required to the orderly acting of their power, which without it would be contrary to rule, and therefore ineffectual; as also it must needs be from the nature of the thing it self; for no act can take place in the Church without or against its own consent, whilest its obedience is voluntary and of choice.

But if it be asked, what then shall the Elders do, in case the Church refuse to consent unto such acts as are indeed according to rule, and warranted by the institution of Christ? it is answered, that they are First diligently to *instruct* them from the word in their duty, making known the mind of Christ unto them in the matter under consideration. (2) To declare unto them the *danger* of their

dissent in obstructing the edification of the Body to the dishonour of the Lord Christ, and their own spiritual disadvantage. (3) To *wait patiently* for the concurrence of the grace of God with their Ministry, in giving light and obedience unto the Church; and (4) In case of the Churches continuance in any failure of duty, to seek for advice and *counsel* from the Elders and Brethren of other Churches, all which particulars might be enlarged, would the nature of our present design and work permit it.

Quest. 29. *What is the duty of the Church towards their Elders, Pastors or Teachers?*

Answ. (1) To have them in reverence and honour for their office and works sake. (2) To obey them conscientiously in all things wherein they speak unto them in the name of the Lord. (2) To pray earnestly for them, that they may, and to exhort them, if need require, to fulfill the work of the Ministry (4) To communicate unto them of their temporals for their comfortable subsistance in the

World,

Word, and usefulness unto others. (5) Wisely to order things by their direction, so as that they may be amongst them without fear. (6) To abide with, and stand by them, in their sufferings for the Gospel, and service of Christ among them. (1) 1 Thes. 5. 12, 13. 1 Tim. 5. 17. (2) Heb. 13. 17. 1 Cor. 16. 16. (3) Ephes. 6. 18, 19. Colos. 4. 3. 2 Thes. 3. 1. Colos. 4. 17. (4) Gal. 6. 6. 1 Cor. 9. 14. (5) 1 Cor. 16. 10. (6) 2 Tim. 1. 16, 17, 18. 2 Tim. 4. 16.

Quest. 30. *Are there any differences in the Office, or Offices, of the Guides, Rulers, Elders or Ministers of the Church?*

Answ. The Office of them that are Teachers, is one and the same among them all; but where there are many in the same Church, it is the will of Christ that they should be peculiarly assigned unto such especial work in the discharge of their office power, as their gifts received from him do peculiarly fit them for, and the necessities of the Church requires. Rom. 12. 4, 5, 6, 7, 8.

6, 7, 8. 1 Cor. 8. 11. 1 Pet. 4. 10. Chap. 5. 2.

Explication.

The *Office* of them that are to instruct the Church in the name and authority of Christ, is one and the same, as hath been shewed before. And there are many names that are equally accommodated unto all that are partakers of it, as Elders, Bishops, Guides; They are all alike Elders, alike Bishops, alike Guides, have the one office in common amongst them, and every one the whole, intire unto himself. But there are names also given unto them, whereby they are distinguisht, not as to Office, but as to their work and employment in the discharge of that office: such are *Pastors* and *Teachers*, Ephes. 4. 11. Which are placed as distinct persons in their work, partakers of the same Office. Now the foundation of this distinction and differences lyes

First, In the different gifts that they have received; For although it be required in them all, that they have received all those

those gifts, abilities, and qualifications which are necessary for the work of the Ministry, yet as to the degrees of their participation of their gifts, some may more excell in one, others in another, 1 Cor. 12. 4, 5, 6. *There are diversities of gifts, but the same spirit, and there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord: and there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all. For to one is given by the spirit the word of wisdom, to another the word of knowledge by the same spirit,* &c. and all those gifts are bestowed upon them to be exercised and laid out, for the profit and benefit of the Church; *Verse* the 7. *The manifestation of the spirit is given to every man to profit withall.* And therefore every one is in an especial manner to attend unto the exercise and use of that gift wherein he doth excell, or which tends most to the edification of the Church, every man being to minister according as he hath received, 1 *Pet.* 4.

Secondly, It lyes in the nature of the work of the Ministry in the Church; which in general may be referred unto two heads or ends. First,

First, The *instruction* of it in the knowledge of God in Christ, and the mysteries of the Gospel, that it might grow in grace, wisdom, saving light, and knowledge.

Secondly, The *exhortation* of it to walk answerable unto light received, in holiness and universal obedience. Now though these several ends of the Ministry cannot be divided or separated, yet they may be distinguished, and so carryed on distinctly, that in the one, knowledge or light may be firstly and principally intended, so as to lead unto obedience; in the other, holiness may be firstly designed, as springing from Gospel light or knowledge. Hence therefore are the Elders of the Church, principally to attend unto that work or that end of the Ministry, which by the Holy-Ghost they are most suited unto. And therefore the Church following the intimations of the Holy-Ghost, in communicating his gifts in variety, as he pleaseth, and attending their own education, may and ought amongst those whom they choose to the Office of Elders or Ministers, withall design them in particular

Particular unto that especial work which they are especially fitted and prepared for; and this upon their being chosen, and set apart, they are accordingly to attend unto: *He that teacheth on teaching, he that exhorteth on exhortation*, Rom. 12. 7, 8. Their Office then is the same, but their teaching, work, and employment on the grounds mentioned, distinct and different.

Quest. 31. *Are there appointed any Elders in the Church, whose office and duty consist in rule and government only?*

Answ. Elders not called to teach ordinarily, nor administer the Sacraments, but to assist and help in the rule and government of the Church, are mentioned in the Scripture. Rom. 12. 8. 1 Cor. 12. 28. 1 Tim. 5. 17.

Explication.

This Office of *ruling* Elders in the Church, is much opposed by some, and in especial by them who have least reason so to do. For First, They object against them, that they are *lay* Elders, when

when those with whom they have to do, deny that distinction of the Church into the *Clergy* and Laity. For although they allow the distinction of it into *Officers*, and the *multitude of the Brethren*, yet they maintain that the whole Church is *Gods Clergy*, his lot, and portion, 1 *Pet.* 5. 3. Again, they affirm them to be *Elders*, and therein not properly of the members of the Church, but Officers set apart unto their Office according to rule, or the appointment of Christ. And if by *Laity*, the people distinct from the Officers of the Church are to be understood, the very term of a *Lay Elder* implyes a contradiction, as designing one, who is, and is not a Church Officer. Besides, these do principally govern the Church by such whom they esteem *Lay-men*, as not in holy-Orders; to whom the principal part of its rule, at least in the execution of it is committed, which renders their objection to this sort of Church Officers unreasonable. Others also have given advantage by making this Office *annual*, or *biennial*, and them that are chosen unto it, which though they plead

plead the *necessity* of their Churches for, as not having Persons meet for this work and duty, who are willing to undertake it constantly during their lives, without such a contribution for their maintenance as they are not able to afford; yet the wisest of them do acknowledge an irregularity in what they do, and wish it remedied. But this hinders not, but that such Church-Officers are indeed designed in the Scripture, and of whom frequent mention is made in the ancient writers, and footsteps also, yet remain in most Churches of their institution, though wofully corrupted. For besides, that some light in this matter may be taken from the Church of the *Jews*, wherein the *Elders* of the *People*, were joyned in Rule with the *Priests*, both in the *Sanhedrim*, and all lesser Assemblies; there is in the Gospel express mention of persons that were assigned peculiarly for Rule and Government in the Church, as 1 *Cor.* 12. 28. And it is in vain pretended that those words, *helps, governments*, do denote *gifts* only, seeing the Apostle expressly enumerates the *persons* in Office, or *Officers*, which the Lord

Christ

Christ then used in the foundation, and Rule of the Churches as then planted. He that *ruleth*, also is distinguisht from him that *teacheth*, and him that *exhorteth*, Rom. 12. 8. and is prescribed *diligence*, as his principal qualification in the discharge of his duty. And the words of the Apostle to this purpose, are express, 1 Tim. 5. 17. *Let the Elders that rule well, be counted worthy of double honour, especially those who labour in the word and doctrine.* For the words expressly assign two sorts of Elders, whereof some only attend unto rule; others moreover labour in the word and doctrine. Neither doth that word, as some would have it, *labour in the Word*, intend any other labour but what is incumbent on all the Pastors and Teachers of their Church as their constant duty; see *Rom.* 6. 12. *Acts* 20. 35. 1 *Thes.* 5. 12. Now can we suppose that the Apostle would affirm them to be worthy of double honour, whom comparing with others, he notes as *remiss* and *negligent* in their work. For it seems that others were more diligent in the discharge of that duty, which was no less

theirs,

their, is only one sort of Elders here here intended. The Scripture is not wont to *commend* such persons as worthy of *double honour*, but rather to propose them as meet for double shame and punishment, *Jer.* 48. 10. 1 *Cor.* 9. 16. And they are unmindful of their own interest, who would have *Bishops* that attend to the rule of the Church, to be distinctly intended by the *Elders that rule* well; seeing the Apostle expressly preferreth before and above them, those that attend constantly to the Word and Doctrine. And besides what is thus expressly spoken concerning the appointment of this sort of Elders in the Church, their *usefulness* in the necessity of their work, and employment, is evident. For whereas a constant care in the Church, that the conversation of all the members of it be such as becometh the Gospel, that the name of our Lord Jesus Christ be not evil spoken of, is of great concernment and importance, and the *Pastors* and Teachers, being to give up themselves continually unto *prayer, and the ministry of the word*, cannot attend unto the constant and daily

oversight

overſight thereof, the uſefulneſs of theſe Elders, whoſe proper and peculiar work it is to have regard unto the holy walking of the Church, muſt needs be manifeſt unto all. But whereas in moſt Churches, there is little or no regard unto the *perſonal holineſs* of the members of them, it is no wonder that no account ſhould be had of them who are ordained by the Lord Chriſt to look after it and promote it.

The qualifications of theſe *Elders*, with the way of their call and ſetting apart unto their Office, being the ſame with thoſe of the *Teaching Elders* before inſiſted on, need not be here again repeated. Their authority alſo in the whole rule of the Church, is every way the ſame with that of the other ſort of Elders, and they are to act in the execution of it with equal reſpect and regard from the Church. Yea the buſineſs of *rule*, being peculiarly committed unto them, and they required to attend thereunto with *diligence* in an eſpecial manner, the work thereof is principally theirs; as that of *labouring in the word and doctrine* doth eſpecially belong unto the

the Paſtors and Teachers of the Churches. And this inſtitution is abuſed, when either unmeet perſons are called to this Office, or thoſe that are called, do not attend unto their duty with *diligence*, or do act only in it by the guidance of the Teaching Officers, without a ſence of their own authority, or due reſpect from the Church.

Queſt. 32. *Is there no other ordinary Office in the Church, but only that of Elders?*

Anſw. Yes of Deacons alſo.

Queſt. 33. *What are the Deacons of the Church?*

Anſw. Approved men choſen by the Church to take care for the neceſſities of the poor belonging thereunto, and other outward occaſions of the whole Church, by the collection, keeping, and diſtribution of the Alms, and other ſupplyes of the Church, ſet apart and commended to the grace of God therein, by Prayer. Acts 6. 3, 5, 6. Phil. 1. 1. 1 Tim. 3. 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13.

Explication.

The Office of the *Deacon*, the nature, end, and uſe of it, the qualification of the perſons to be admitted unto it, the way and manner of their Election and ſetting apart; are all of them plainly expreſſed in the Scripture, Acts 6. 1, 2, 3. *There aroſe a murmuring of the Grecians againſt the Hebrews, becauſe the Widdows were neglected in the daily miniſtration; then the twelve called the multitude of the Diſciples unto them, and ſaid, it is not reaſon that we ſhould leave the word of God, and ſerve Tables; wherefore Brethren, look ye out among you ſeven men of honeſt report, full of the Holy-Ghoſt, and wiſdom, whom we may appoint over this buſineſs; and the ſaying pleaſed the whole multitude, and they choſe* Stephen, &c. *whom they ſet before the Apoſtles, and when they had prayed, they laid their hands on them.* 1 Tim. 3. 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13. *Likewiſe muſt the Deacons be grave, not double tongued, not given to much Wine, not given to filthy lucre, holding the myſtery of the faith in a pure Conſcience;*

Conſcience; and let theſe alſo firſt be proved, then let them uſe the Office of a Deacon, being found blameleſs; the Huſbands of one Wife, ruling their Children, and their own houſe well, for they that have uſed the Office of a Deacon well, purchaſe to themſelves a good degree, and great boldneſs in the faith which is in Chriſt Jeſus. Theſe things are thus plain and expreſs in the Scripture. But whereas many have grown weary of the obſervation of the inſtitutions of the Goſpel, this Office hath for a long time been loſt amongſt the moſt of Chriſtians. By ſome the name is retained, but applyed to another work, duty, and employment than this to which it is peculiarly appropriated in the Scripture. Their proper and original work of taking care for the poor, they ſay, is provided for by others; and therefore that *office* being needleſs, another, unto another purpoſe, under the ſame name, is erected. Such are Deacons that may *read Service*, *Preach* and Baptiſe, when they have licenſe thereunto. But this choice, to rej & an Office of the appointment of Chriſt, under pretence of

proviſion made for the duties of it another way, and the erecting of one not appointed by him, ſeems not equall. But whereas it is our duty in all things to have regard to the authority of Chriſt and his appointments in the Goſpel, if we claim the priviledge of being called after his name, ſome think that if what he hath appointed may be colourably performed another way without reſpect unto his inſtitutions, that is far the beſt. But omitting the practice of other Men, the things that concern this Office in the Church, are as was ſaid, clear in the Scripture.

Firſt, The perſons called unto it are to be of *honeſt report*, furniſhed with the gifts of the Holy-Ghoſt, eſpecially with *wiſdom*, Acts 6. 3. And thoſe other endowments uſefull in the diſcharge of their duty mentioned, 1 *Tim.* 3. 8.

Secondly, The way whereby they come to be made partakers of this Office, is by the choice or *election* of the Church, *Acts* 6. 2, 3, 5. whereupon they are ſolemnly to be ſet apart by prayer.

Thirdly, Their work or duty conſiſts in

in a daily miniſtration unto the neceſſities of the poor *Saints*, or Members of the Church, *Verſ.* 1, 2.

Fourthly, To this end that they may be enabled ſo to do, it is ordained, that every *firſt day* the Members of the Church do contribute according as God enables them of their ſubſtance, for the ſupply of the wants of the poor, 1 *Cor.* 16. 2. And alſo *occaſionally*, as neceſſity ſhall require, or God move their hearts by his grace.

Fifthly, Hereunto is to be added whatever by the providence of God may be conferred upon the Church for its outward advantage, with reference unto the end mentioned, *Acts* 4. 34, 35.

Sixthly, Theſe ſupplyes of the Church being committed to the care and charge of the *Deacons*, they are from thence to miniſter with *diligence* and *wiſdom* unto the neceſſities of the poor; that ſo the needy may be ſupplyed, that there may be none that lack, the *rich* may contribute of their riches according to the mind of Chriſt, and in obedience unto his command, that they

which miniſter well in this office, may purchaſe to themſelves a good degree, and boldneſs in the faith, and that in all, the name of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt may be glorified with praiſe and thankſgiving.

It belongs therefore unto Perſons called unto this Office,

Firſt, To acquaint themſelves with the *outward condition* of thoſe that appear to be poor and needy in the Church, whether by the addreſſes of ſuch poor ones, who are bound to make known their wants, occaſions, and neceſſities unto them, or by the information of others, or their own obſervation.

Secondly, to acquaint the Elders and the Church as occaſion requireth with the neceſſities of the poor under their care, that thoſe who are able may be ſtirred up by the Elders, to a free ſupply and contribution.

Thirdly, To diſpoſe what they are entruſted with *faithfully*, cheerfully, tenderly, with *partiality* or preferring one before another, for any outward reſpect whatever.

Fourthly, To keep and give an account

count unto the Church when called for, of what they have received, and how they have diſpoſed of it, that ſo they may be known to have well diſcharged their Office; that is with care, wiſdom, and tenderneſs, whereby they procure to themſelves a good degree with boldneſs in the faith, and the Church is encouraged to entruſt them farther with this ſacrifice of their almes, which is ſo acceptable unto God.

Queſt. 24. *Wherein conſiſts the general duty of the whole Church, and every member thereof in their proper ſtation and condition?*

Anſw. In perfoꝛming, doing, and kæping inbiolate all the commands and inſtitutions of Jeſus Chꝛiſt, walking unblameably and fruitfully in the Woꝛld, holding foꝛth the Woꝛd of truth, and glozifying the Loꝛd Chꝛiſt in and by the pꝛofeſſion of his name, and kæping his teſtimony unto the end. Matth. 28. 20. Acts 2. 42. Phil 2. 15, 16. Chap. 4. 8, 9. 1 Theſ. 3. 8. 1 Per. 4. 10, 11, 12, 13, 14. 1 Tim. 3. 15. Heb. 10. 23.

Explication

Beſides the general duties of Chriſtianity incumbent on all Believers, or Diſciples of Chriſt as ſuch, there are ſundry eſpecial duties required of them as *gathered* into Church ſocieties, upon the account of an eſpecial truſt committed unto them in that ſtate and condition; For,

Firſt, the Church being appointed as the *ſeat* and ſubject of all the inſtitutions of Chriſt, and ordinances of Goſpel worſhip, it is its duty, that is, of the whole body and every member in his proper place, to uſe all care, watchfulneſs and diligence, that all the commands of Chriſt be kept inviolate, and all his inſtitutions obſerved, according to his mind and will. Thus thoſe *added to the Church*, *Acts* 2. 42. Together with the whole Church, *continued ſtedfaſtly* (*which* argues care, circumſpection and diligence) in *the Apoſtles doctrine and fellowſhip and breaking of bread and prayers*; Which principal duties are enumerated, to expreſs their reſpect towards

towards all. This is their *ſtanding faſt in the Lord*, which was a matter of ſuch joy to the Apoſtle when he found it in the *Theſſalonians*; 1 Ephe. 3. 8. *For now we live if ye ſtand faſt in the Lord.* That *order* and ſtedfaſtneſs which he rejoyced over in the *Coloſſians*; Chap. 2. 5. *For though I am abſent in the fleſh, yet am I with you in the ſpirit, joying and beholding your order and the ſtedfaſtneſs of your faith in Chriſt.* And where this duty is deſpiſed, men contenting themſelves with what is done by others, there is a great neglect of that *faithfulneſs* in obedience which the Church owes unto Jeſus Chriſt.

Secondly, the *Glory* of the Lord Chriſt, and the doctrine of the Gospel to be manifeſted in, and by the power of an holy exemplary converſation, is committed unto the Church and all the members of it. This is one end wherefore the Lord Chriſt calls them out of the World, ſeparates them to be a peculiar people unto himſelf, brings them forth unto a viſible profeſſion, and puts his name upon them, namely that in their walking, and converſation, he may ſhew forth

forth the holineſs of his doctrine, and power of his ſpirit, grace, and example to effect in them all holineſs, godlyneſs, righteouſneſs and honeſty in the World. Hence are they earneſtly exhorted unto theſe things. Phil. 4. 8. 9. *Brethren whatſoever things are true, whatſoever things are honeſt, whatſoever things are juſt, whatſoever things are pure, whatſoever things are lovely, whatſoever things are of good report, if there be any vertue, if their be any praiſe, think on theſe things*; and that to this end, that the doctrine of the Goſpel may be adorned and Chriſt glorified in all things; *Tit.* 2. 10. And thoſe who fail herein are ſaid to be *Enemies of the croſs of Chriſt*; Phil. 3. 18; As hindring the progreſs of the doctrine thereof, by repreſenting it undeſirable in their converſation. This alſo therefore, even the dutie of univerſal holineſs, with an eſpecial regard unto the honour of Chriſt, and the Goſpel which they are called and deſigned to teſtifie and expreſs in the World, is incumbent on the Church, and every member of it; namely as the Apoſtle ſpeaks,

that

that they be blameleſs, and harmleſs, the ſons of God, without rebukes in the midſt of a crooked and perverſe generation, among whom they are to ſhine as lights in the World, Phil. 2. 15.

Thirdly, the care of *declaring* and manifeſting the *truth* is alſo committed unto them. Chriſt hath made the Church to be the *pillar and ground of truth.* 1 *Tim.* 3. 15. where the truth of the Goſpel is ſo firmly *ſeated*, founded, fixed, eſtabliſhed, and then *lifted up* in the wayes of Chriſts appointment to be ſeen, diſcerned, and known by others. And as this is done *principally* in the preaching of the Goſpel by the *Elders* of the Church, and in their contending for the truth once delivered unto the ſaints, *Jude* 3. So it is alſo the duty of the whole Church, *to hold forth the word of life*, Phill. 2. 16. by miniſtring of the gift that *every man* hath received; 1 *Peter*, 4. 10. In the way of Chriſts appointment. In theſe, and the like inſtances, doth our Lord Jeſus require of his Church that they expreſs in the World their ſubjection unto him, and his authority; and that they

they abide therein unto the end, againſt all oppoſition whatever.

The ſinful neglect of Churches in the diſcharge of their duty herein, was one great means of that *Apoſtacy* from the rule of the Goſpel which they generally of old fell into. When the members of them began to think that they had no advantage by their ſtate and condition, but only the outward participation of ſome Ordinance of worſhip, and no duty incumbent on them, but only to attend and follow the motions and actings of their Guides, the whole ſocieties quickly became corrupt, and fit to be diſpoſed of according to the carnal intereſt of thoſe that had by their neglect and ſin, gotten dominion over them. And at all times, as the *people* were negligent in their duty, the *Leaders* of them were apt to uſurp undue authority. When the one ſort will not do that which they ought, the other are ready to take upon them what they ought not. It is a circumſpect performance of duty on all hands alone, that will keep all ſorts of perſons in the Church within thoſe bounds, and limits,

limits, and up to thoſe rights, and priviledges, which Chriſt hath allotted and granted unto them. And herein alone doth the order, honour, and beauty of the Church conſiſt. Church members therefore are to *ſearch* and enquire after the particular duties, which *as ſuch*, are incumbent on them; as alſo to conſider what influence their ſpecial ſtate and condition as they are Church members, ought to have into all the duties of their obedience as they are Chriſtians. For this priviledge is granted unto them for their *edification*, that is their furtherance in their whole courſe of walking before God. And if this be neglected, if they content themſelves with a *name to live* in this or that Church, to partake of the Ordinances that are ſtated and ſolemnly adminiſtred, only that which would have been to their advantage, may prove to be a ſnare and temptation unto them. What theſe eſpecial duties are in the particular inſtances of them, is of too large a conſideration here to be inſiſted on. Beſides it is the great dutie of the Guides of the Church, to be inculcating of them into

into the minds of those committed to their charge. For the Churches due performance of its duties, is their honour, Crown, and reward.

Qu. 35. *Whence do you reckon prayer, which is a part of moral and natural worship, among the institutions of Christ in his Church?*

An. On many accounts; as (1) because the Lord Christ hath commanded his Church to attend unto the worship of God therein. (2) because he bestowes on the Ministers of the Church, gifts and ability of prayer for the benefit and edification thereof. (3) he hath appointed that all his other ordinances should be administred with prayer, whereby it becomes a part of them. (4) because himself ministers in the holy place, as the great High priest of his Church to present their prayers unto God at the throne of grace. (5) because in all the prayers of the Church, there is an especial regard had unto himself, and the whole work of his mediation. (1) Luke 18. 1. Chap. 21. 36. Rom. 12. 5. 1 Tim. 2.

1 Tim. 2. 1, 2. (2) Ephe. 4. 8, 12, 13. Rom. 8. 15, 16. Gal. 4. 6. (3) Acts 2. 42. 1 Tim. 4. 5. (4) Rev. 8 3, 4. Heb. 4. 14, 15, 16. Chap. 6. 20. Chap. 10. 20, 21, 22. (5) John 14. 13. Chap. 15. 16, 22, 26. Ephe. 3. 14, 15.

Qu. 36. *May not the Church in the ſolemn warſhip of God, and celebration of the Ordinances of the Goſpel, make uſe of, and content it ſelf in the uſe of forms of prayer in an unknown tongue compoſed by others and preſcribed unto them.*

An. So to do would be; (1) contrary to one principal end of prayer it ſelf, which is that Believers may therein apply themſelves to the throne of grace for ſpiritual ſupplies according to the preſent condition, wants, and exigencies of their ſouls. (2) to the main end that the Lord Jeſus Chriſt aimed at in ſupplying men with gifts for the diſcharge of the work of the miniſtry, tending to render the the promiſe of ſending the holy Ghoſt, which is the immediate cauſe of the

Churches

Churches preſervation and continuance, needleſs, and uſeleſs. Moreover (3) It will render the diſcharge of the duty of Miniſters unto ſeveral precepts and exhortations of the Goſpel, for the uſe, ſtirring up and exerciſe of their gifts impoſſible, and (4) thereby hinder the edification of the Church, the great end of all Ordinances and inſtitutions. (1) Rom. 8. 26. Phil. 4. 6. Heb. 4. 16. 1 Pet. 4. 7. (2) Epheſ. 4. 8, 12, 13. (3) 1 Tim. 4. 14. 2 Tim. 1. 6, 7. Coloſ. 4. 17. Matth. 25. 14, 15, 16. (4) 1 Cor. 12. 7.

Queſt. 37. *Is the conſtant work of Preaching the Goſpel by the Elders of the Church, neceſſary?*

Anſw. It is ſo, both on the part of the Elders or Miniſters themſelves, of whom that duty is ſtrictly required, and who principally therein labour and watch for the good of the flock; and on the part of the Church, for the furtherance of their faith, and obedience, by inſtruction, reproof, exhortation, and conſolation. Matth. 24. 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51. Rom. 12. 7, 8. 1 Cor. 9. 17, 18.

17, 18. Epheſ. 4. 12, 13. 1 Tim. 4 15, 16. Chap. 5. 17. 2 Tim. 2. 24, 25. Chap. 3. 14, 15, 16, 17. Chapter 4. 2.

Queſt. 38. *Who are the proper ſubjects of Baptiſm?*

Anſw. Profeſſing Believers, if not Baptiſed in their infancy, and their Infant ſeed. Matth. 28. 19. Acts 2. 38, 39. Acts 16. 33. 1 Cor. 1. 16. 1 Cor. 7. 14. Coloſ. 2. 12, 13. With Geneſis, 17. 10, 11, 12.

Queſt. 39. *Where, and to whom, is the Ordinance of the Lords Supper to be adminiſtred?*

Anſw. In the Church, or Aſſembly of the congregation, to all the Members of it, rightly prepared, and duly aſſembled, or to ſuch of them as are ſo aſſembled. 1 Cor. 11. 20, 21, 22, 28, 29, 33. Acts. 2. 46.

Queſt. 40. *How often is that Ordinance to be adminiſtred?*

Anſw. Every Firſt day of the week, or at leaſt as often as oppoꝛtunity, and

 conbeniency

convenience may be obtained. 1 Cor. 11. 26. Acts 20. 7.

Queſt. 41. *What is the Diſcipline of the Church?*

Anſw. It conſiſts in the due exerciſe of that authority and power which the Lord Chriſt in and by his Word hath granted unto the Church, for its continuance, increaſe, and preſervation, in purity, order, and holineſs, according to his appointment, Matth. 16. 19. Rom. 12. 8. 2 Cor. 10. 4, 5, 6. Rev. 2. 2, 20.

Explication.

Sundry things are to be conſidered about this diſcipline of the Church; as

Firſt, The *foundation* of it, which is a grant of power and authority made unto it by Jeſus Chriſt, as Mediator, Head, King, and Law-giver of his Church. For all *diſcipline* being an act of power, and this being exerciſed in and about things internal, and ſpiritual, no men can of themſelves, or by grant of any others, have any right or authority

rity to, or in the exerciſe thereof. Whoever hath any intereſt herein, or right hereunto, it muſt be granted unto him from above, by Jeſus Chriſt, and that as Mediator and head of his Church. For as all Church power, is in an eſpecial manner by the authority and grant of the Father veſted in him alone, *Matth.* 28. 18. *Epheſ.* 1. 20, 21, 22, 23. So the *nature* of it which is *ſpiritual*, the *object* of it which are the Conſciences and Goſpel priviledges of Believers, with the *ends* of it, namely the glory of God in Chriſt, with the ſpiritual and eternal good of the ſouls of men, do all manifeſt that it can have no other right nor foundation. This in the firſt place is to be fixed, that no authority can be exerciſed in the Church, but what is derived from Jeſus Chriſt, as was ſpoken before.

Secondly, The *means* whereby the Lord Chriſt doth communicate this power and authority unto his Church, is his *word* or his *law* and conſtitution concerning it in the Goſpel; ſo that it is exactly limited and bounded thereby. And no power or authority can be exerciſed in the Church, but what is

granted and conveyed unto it by the word; seeing that Christ communicates no power or authority any other wayes. What ever of that nature is beside it, or beyond it, is meer usurpation, and *null* in its exercise. Herein is the commission of the Guides and Rules of the Church expressed, which they are not to exceed in any thing. Herein are bounds and limits fixed to the actings of the whole Church, and of every part and member of it.

Thirdly, This power or authority, thus granted, and conveyed by Jesus Christ, is to be exercised as to the *manner* of the administration of discipline, with *skill and diligence*, Rom. 12. 6. 1 Cor. 12. and the skill required hereunto, is a gift, or an ability of mind bestowed by the Holy-Ghost upon men to put in execution the Laws of Christ, for the government of the Church, in the way and order by him appointed; or a *spiritual wisdom* whereby men know how to behave themselves in the house of God, in their several places, for its due edification in faith and love, 1 *Tim.* 3. 15. And this ability of mind to make a due application

application of the Laws of the Goſpel unto perſons, times, and actions with their circumſtances, is ſuch a gift of the Holy-Ghoſt, as whereof there are ſeveral degrees anſwering to the diſtinct duties that are incumbent on the *Rulers* of the Church on the one hand, and *Members* on the other. And where this skill and wiſdome is wanting, there it is impoſsible that the *Diſcipline* of the Church, ſhould be preſerved or carryed on. Hereunto alſo diligence and watchfulneſs are to be added, without which ability and power will never obtain their proper end in a due manner, *Rom.* 12. 6, 7, 8.

Fourthly, The *end* of this *diſcipline* is continuance, increaſe, and preſervation of the Church, according to the rule of its firſt inſtitution, 1 *Cor.* 5. 7. This power, hath Chriſt given his Church for its conſervation, without which it muſt neceſſarily decay, and come to nothing. Nor is it to be imagined that where any Church is called and gathered according to the mind of Chriſt, that he hath left it deſtitute of power and authority to preſerve it ſelf, in that

ſtate and order which he hath appointed unto it. And that which was one principal cauſe of the decayes of the *Aſian* Churches, was the neglect of this *Diciplne*, the power and priviledge whereof, the Lord had left unto them and intruſted them withall, for their own preſervation in order, purity and holineſs. And therefore for the neglect thereof they were greatly blamed by him. *Rev.* 2. 14, 15, 20. *Chap.* 3. 2. as is alſo the Church of *Corinth* by the Apoſtle, 1 *Cor.* 5. 2. as they are commended, who attended unto the diligent exerciſe of it, *Revel.* 2. 2. *Chap.* 3. 9. The diſuſe alſo of it, hath been the occaſion of all the defilements, abominations and confuſions, that have ſpread themſelves over many Churches in the World.

Queſt. 42. *Unto whom is the power and adminiſtration of this Diſcipline committed by Jeſus Chriſt ?*

Anſw. As to the authority to be exerted in it in the things wherein the whole Church is concerned, unto the Elders ; as unto tryall, judgement and

and conſent in, and unto its exerciſe unto the whole Brotherhood; as unto love, care, and watchfulneſs in private and particular caſes, to every member of the Church. Matth. 24. 45. Epheſ. 4. 13, 14. Acts 20. 28. 1 Tim. 3. 5. Chap. 5. 17. Heb. 13. 17. 1 Pet. 2. 3. 1 Theſ. 5. 12. Gal. 6. 1, 2. 1 Cor. 4. 14. 1 Cor. 5. 2, 4, 5. 2 Cor. 2. 6, 7, 8. 2 Tim. 4. 2.

Explication.

It hath been ſhewed that this power is granted unto the Church by virtue of the *Law* and conſtitution of Chriſt. Now this Law aſsigns the means and way whereby any perſons do obtain an intereſt therein; and makes the juſt allotments to all concerned in it. What this Law, Conſtitution or Word of Chriſt aſsigns unto any, *as ſuch*, that they are the *firſt ſeat* and ſubject of, by what way or means ſoever they come to be intruſted therein. Thus that power or authority which is given unto the Elders of the Church, doth not firſt *formally* reſide in the body of the Church unor-

ganized or diſtinct from them, though they are called unto their Office by their ſuffrage and choice; but they are themſelves as ſuch, the firſt ſubject of Office power; For ſo is the Will of the Lord Chriſt. Nor is the intereſt of the whole Church in this power of diſcipline whatever it be, given unto it by the Elders, but is immediately granted unto it, by the will and Law of the Lord Jeſus.

Firſt, In this way and manner the Authority above deſcribed, is given in the firſt place, as ſuch, unto the *Elders* of the Church. This Authority was before explained, in anſwer unto the 28*th*. queſtion, as alſo was the *way* whereby they receive it. And it is that power of office whereby they are enabled for the diſcharge of their whole duty, in the teaching, and ruling of the Church; called the *power of the keyes*, from *Mat.* 16. 19. Which expreſſion being *Metaphorical*, and in general lyable unto many interpretations, is to be underſtood according to the declaration made of it in thoſe particular inſtances wherein it is expreſſed. Nor is it a two-fold

power

power or Authority that the Elders of the Church have committed unto them; one to teach and another to rule, commonly called the power of order, and of juriſdiction; but it is *one power of Office*, the duties whereof are of ſeveral kinds, referred unto the two general heads, firſt of *teaching* by preaching the word and celebration of the Sacraments, and (2) Of *rule* or government. By virtue hereof, are they made *Rulers* over the houſe of God, *Matth.* 24. 45. *Stewards* in his houſe, 1 *Cor.* 4. 1. *Overſeers* of the Church, *Act.* 20. 28. 1 *Peter* 5. 2. *Guides* unto the Church, *Heb.* 13. 7, 17. Not that they have a ſupream or *autocratorical* power committed unto them, to enable them to do what ſeems right and good in their own eyes, ſeeing they are expreſly bound up unto the terms of their Commiſſion, Matth. 28. 19, 20. *To teach men to do and obſerve all, and only what Chriſt hath commanded*; nor have they by virtue of it, any dominion in, or over the Church, that is, the laws, rules or priviledges of it, or the conſciences of the Diſciples of Chriſt, to alter, change, add, diminiſh, or bind by their

their own authority, 1 *Pet.* 5. 3. *Mark* 10. 42, 43, 44. But it is a power meerly *ministerial*, in whose exercise they are unto the Lord Christ accountable *servants*, Heb. 13. 17. Matth. 24. 45. And Servants of the Church for Jesus sake, 2 *Cor.* 4. 5. This authority in the Discipline of the Church they exert and put forth by virtue of their Office; and not either as declaring of the power of the Church it self, or acting what is delegated unto them thereby, but as ministerially exercising the authority of Christ committed unto themselves.

Secondly, The body of the Church, or the multitude of the Brethren, (women being excepted by especial prohibition, 1 *Cor.* 14. 34, 35. 1 *Tim.* 2. 11, 12.) Is by the Law and constitution of Christ in the Gospel, interested in the administration of this power of discipline in the Church, so far as,

First, To consider, try, and make a judgement, in and about all persons, things, and causes, in reference whereunto it is to be exercised. Thus the *Brethren* at *Jerusalem* joyned in the consideration of the observation of *Mosaical*

cal ceremonies with the Apoſtles and Elders, *Act.* 15. 23. And the *multitude* of them to whom letters were ſent about it, likewiſe did the ſame, *Verſe* the 30, 31, 32. And this they thought it their duty and concernment to do, *Chap.* 21, 22. And they are blamed, who applyed not themſelves unto this duty, 1 *Cor.* 5. 4, 5, 6. Thence are the Epiſtles of *Paul* to the Churches to inſtruct them in their duties, and priviledges in Chriſt, and how they ought to behave themſelves in the ordering of all things amongſt them according to his mind. And theſe are directed unto the Churches themſelves, either joyntly with their Elders, or diſtinctly from them, *Phil.* 1. 1. And the whole preſervation of Church-order, is on the account of this duty recommended unto them. Neither can what they do in complyance with their Guides and Rulers, be any part of their obedience unto the Lord Chriſt, unleſs they make previouſly thereunto a rational conſideration and judgement by the rule, of what is to be done. Neither is the Church of Chriſt to be ruled without its

its knowledge, or againſt its will; nor in any thing is blind obedience acceptable to God.

Secondly, The *Brethren* of the Church are intruſted with the priviledge of giving and teſtifying their conſent unto all acts of Church power, which though it belong not *formally* unto the authority of them, it is neceſſary unto their validity and efficacy; and that ſo far forth, as that they are ſaid to *do* and *act* what is done and effected thereby, 1 *Cor.* 5. 4, 13. 2 *Cor.* 2. 6, 7, 8. And they who have this priviledge of *conſent* which hath ſo great an influence into the action and validity of it, have alſo the liberty of diſſent; when any thing is propoſed to be done, the *warrant* whereof from the Word and the *rule* of its performance, is not evident unto them.

Qu. 43. *Wherein doth the exerciſe of the authority for diſcipline committed unto the* Elders *of the* Church *conſiſt?*

An. (1) In perſonal private admonition of any member or members of the Church, in caſe of ſin, errour, or any

any miscarriage known unto themselves. (2) In publick admonition in case of offences persisted in and brought orderly to the knowledge and consideration of the Church. (3) In the ejection of obstinate offenders from the society and communion of the Church. (4) In exhorting, comforting, and restoring to the enjoyment and exercise of Church privileges such as are recovered from the error of their wayes; all according to the lawes, rules, and directions of the Gospel. (1) Matth. 18. 15. 1 Thess. 5. 14. 1 Cor. 4. 14. Titus 1. 13. Chap. 2. 15. 2 Tim. 4. 2. (2) 1 Tim. 5. 19. 20. Matth. 18. 16, 17. (3) Titus 3. 10. 1 Tim. 1. 20. Matth. 18. 17. 1 Cor. 5. 5. Gal. 5. 12. (4) 2 Cor. 2. 7. Gal. 6. 1. 2 Thess. 3. 15.

Qu. 44. *May the Church cast any Person out of its communion without previous admonition?*

An. It may in some cases, where the offence is notorious, and the scandal grievous, so that nothing be done against other general rules. 1 Cor. 4.

Qu. 45.

Qu. 45. *Wherein doth the liberty and duty of the whole brotherhood in the exercise of discipline in the Church in particular consist?*

An. (1) In a meek consideration of the condition and temptations of offenders, with the nature of their offences, when orderly proposed unto the Church. (2) In judging with the Elders according to rule, what in all cases of offence is necessary to be done, for the good of the offenders themselves, and for the edification and vindication of the whole Church. (3) In their consent unto, and concurrence in the admonition, ejection, pardoning and restoring of offenders, as the matter shall require. Gal. 6. 1, 2. 1 Cor. 5. 2, 4, 5, 12. 1 Cor. 6. 2. 2 Cor. 2. 6, 7, 8.

Qu. 46. *What is the duty of private Members in reference unto the discipline appointed by Christ in his Church?*

An. It is their duty in their mutual watch over one another, to exhort each other unto holiness and perseverance; and if they observe any thing

thing in the wayes and walkings of of any of their fellow Members not according unto the rule, and the duty of their profeſſion, which therefore gives them offence, to admoniſh them thereof in private with lobe meekneſs and wiſdom, and in caſe they prevail not unto their amendment, to take the aſſiſtance of ſome other Brethren in the ſame work; and if they fail in ſucceſs therein alſo, to report the matter by the Elders direction, unto the whole Church. Matth. 18. 16, 17, 18. 1 Theſſ. 5. 14.

Explication.

In theſe queſtions an enquirie is made after the exerciſe of diſcipline in the Church, as to that part of it which belongs unto the reproof and correction of miſcarriages according to the diſtribution of right, power, and priviledge, before explained.

The firſt act hereof conſiſts in *private admonition*; for ſo hath our Lord ordained, that in caſe any Brother, or member of the Church, do in any thing

thing walk diſorderly, and not according to the rule of the Goſpel, that he, or they, unto whom it is obſerved, and who are thereby offended, may and ought to admoniſh the perſon or perſons ſo offending of their miſcarriage and offence, concerning which is to be obſerved.

Firſt, what is previouſly required thereunto; and that is,

Firſt, that in all the members of the Church there ought to be *love without diſſimulation.* They are to be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love, *Rom.* 12. 9, 10. which as they are taught of God, ſo they are greatly exhorted thereunto; *Heb.* 13. 1. This love is the bond of perfection the moſt excellent way and means of preſerving Church order, and farthering the edification thereof. 1 *Cor.* 13. Without which, well ſeated, and confirmed in the hearts and minds of Church members, no duty of their Relation can ever be performed in a due manner.

Secondly, this love is to exert and put forth it ſelf in tender care and watchfulneſs for the good of each other; which

which are to work by mutual exhortations, informations, inſtructions, according as opportunities do offer themſelves, or as the neceſſities of any do ſeem to require. *Heb.* 3. 13. *Chap.* 10. 24.

Secondly, this duty of admoniſhing offenders privately and perſonally, is common to the Elders with all the members of the Church; neither doth it belong properly unto the Elders as ſuch but as Brethren of the ſame ſociety. And yet by virtue of their office the Elders are enabled to do it with more Authority morally, though office power properly be not exerciſed therein. By virtue alſo of their conſtant general watch over the whole flock in the diſcharge of their office, they are enabled to take notice of, and diſcern miſcarriages in any of the members, ſooner than others. But as to the exerciſe of the diſcipline of the Church in this matter, this duty is equally incumbent on every member of it, according as the obligation on them to watch over one another, and to exerciſe eſpecial love towards each other is equal: Whence it is diſtinguiſhed from that private *paſtoral* admonition, which is an act of the teach-

ing office and power, not directly belonging unto the rule or government enquired after. But this admonition is an effect of love and where it proceedeth not from thence, it is irregular, *Matth.* 18. 16, 17, 18. *Rom.* 15. 14.

Thirdly, this duty is so incumbent on every member of the Church, that in case of the neglect thereof, he both sinneth against the institution of Christ, and makes himself partaker of the sin of the party offending, and is also guilty of his danger, and ruine thereby, with all that disadvantage which will accrue to the Church, by any of the members of it continuing in sin against the rule of the Gospel. They have not only *liberty* thus to admonish one another, but it is their express and indispensible duty so to do. The neglect whereof is interpreted by God to be *hatred of our Brother*; such as herewith the love of God is inconsistent; *Levit* 19. 17. 1 *John* 4. 20. *Chap.* 3. 15.

Fourthly, although this duty be personally incumbent on every individual member of the Church, yet this hinders not but if the sin of an offender be

be known to more than one at the ſame time, and they joyntly take offence thereat, they may together in the firſt inſtance admoniſh him, which yet ſtill is but the firſt, and *private* admonition; which is otherwiſe, when others are called into aſſiſtance, who are not themſelves acquainted with the offence but only by information, and joyne in it, not upon the account of their own being offended, but of being deſired according unto rule to give aſſiſtance to them that are ſo.

Fifthly, the way and manner of the diſcharge of this duty is, that it be done with prudence, tenderneſs, and due regard unto all circumſtances; whence the Apoſtle ſuppoſeth a ſpiritual *abilitie* to be neceſſary for this work Rom. 15. 14. Ye *alſo are full of goodneſs, filled with all knowledge, alſo able to admoniſh one another*; eſpecially four things are to be diligently heeded.

Firſt, that the whole duty be ſo managed, that the perſon *offending* may be convinced, that it is done out of *love* to him and affectionate conſcientious care over him, that he may take

no occaſion thereby for the exaſperation of his own ſpirit.

Secondly, that the Perſons *admoniſhing* others of their offence, do make it appear that what they do is in obedience unto an inſtitution of Chriſt, and therein to preſerve their own ſouls from ſin, as well as to benefit the offenders.

Thirdly, that the admonition be grounded on a rule, which alone gives it authority and efficacy.

Fourthly, that there be a readineſs manifeſted by them, to receive ſatisfaction; either (1) In caſe that upon tryal, it appeareth the information they have had of the miſcarriage whence the offence aroſe, was *undue*, or not well grounded; or (2) of acknowledgement and repentance.

Sixthly, The ends of this Ordinance and inſtitution of Chriſt, are,

(1.) To keep up Love without diſſimulation among all the members of the Church; for if *offences* ſhould abide unremoved, love which is the bond of perfection, would not long continue in ſincerity; which tends to the diſſolution of the whole ſociety.

(2.) To

(2.) To gain the *offender*, by delivering him from the guilt of ſin, that he may not lye under it, and procure the wrath of God againſt himſelf, *Levit.* 19. 17.

(3.) To preſerve his perſon from *diſhonour* and diſreputation, and thereby to keep up his uſefulneſs in the Church. To this end hath our Lord appointed the diſcharge of this duty in private, that the failings of men may not be unneceſſarily divulged, and themſelves thereby expoſed unto temptation.

(4.) To preſerve the Church from that *ſcandal* that might befall it, by the haſty opening of all the reall or ſuppoſed faylings of its members. And

(5.) To prevent its *trouble* in the publick hearing of things that may be otherwiſe healed and removed.

Seventhly, In caſe theſe ends are obtained, either by the ſuppoſed offending perſons *clearing of themſelves*, and manifeſting themſelves innocent of the crimes charged on them, as *Joſhua* 22. 22, 23, 24, 25. 2 *Cor.* 7. 11. Or by their *acknowledgement*, repentance, and

amendment, then this part of the diſcipline of the Church hath, through the grace of Chriſt obtained its appointed effect.

Eighthly, In caſe the perſons offending, be not humbled nor reformed, nor do give ſatisfaction unto them by whom they are admoniſhed, then hath our Lord ordained a ſecond degree of this private exerciſe of diſcipline; that the perſons who being offended, have diſcharged the foregoing duty themſelves according unto rule, ſhall take unto them others, two or three, as the occaſion may ſeem to require, to joyn with them in the ſame work and duty, to be performed in the ſame manner for the ſame ends, with that before deſcribed, *Matth.* 18, 15, 16, 17. And it is the duty of theſe perſons ſo called in for aſſiſtance;

Firſt, To judge of the crime, fault, or offence reported to them; and not to proceed unleſs they find it to conſiſt in ſomething expreſly contrary to the rule of the Goſpel, and atteſted in ſuch manner, and with ſuch evidence, as their mutual love doth require in them, with

reſpect

reſpect unto their Brethren. And they are to judge of the teſtimony that is given concerning the truth of the offence communicated unto them, that they may not ſeem either lightly to take up a report againſt their Brother, or to diſcredit the teſtimony of others.

Secondly, In caſe they find the offence pretended not to be a reall offence indeed contrary to the rule of the Goſpel, or that it is not aright grounded, as to the evidence of it, but taken up upon prejudice, or an over-eaſie credulity, contrary to the law of that love which is required amongſt Church-members, deſcribed 1 *Cor.* 13. and commanded as the great means of the edification of the Church and preſervation of its union, then to convince the *brother offended* of his miſtake, and with him to ſatisfie the perſon pretended to be the offender, that no breach or *ſchiſm* may happen among the members of the ſame body.

Thirdly, Being ſatisfied of the crime and teſtimony, they are to aſſociate themſelves with the offended Brother in the ſame work and duty, that he him-

ſelf had before diſcharged towards the offender.

Ninthly, Becauſe there is no determination how often theſe *private admonitions* are to be uſed in caſe of offence, it is evident from the nature of the thing it ſelf, that they are to be reiterated; firſt the one, and then the other, whileſt there is any ground of hope, that the ends of them may be obtained through the bleſſing of Chriſt, the Brother gained, and the offence taken away. Neither of theſe then is to be deſerted, or laid aſide, on the firſt, or ſecond attempt, as though it were performed only to make way for ſomewhat farther; but it is to be waited on with prayer and patience, as an ordinance of Chriſt appointed for attaining the end aimed at.

Tenthly, In caſe there be not the ſucceſs aimed at obtained in theſe ſeveral degrees of private admonition, it is then the will of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, that the matter be reported unto the Church, that the offender may be publickly admoniſhed thereby, and brought to repentance; wherein is to be obſerved, Firſt,

Firſt, That the perſons who have endeavoured in vain to reclaim their offending Brother by private admonition, are to acquaint the Elders of the Church with the caſe and crime: as alſo what they have done according to rule, for the rectifying of it; who upon that information, are obliged to communicate the knowledge of the whole matter to the Church. This is to be done by the Elders, as to whom the preſervation of order in the Church, and the rule of its proceeding do belong, as we have ſhewed before.

Secondly, The report made to the Church by the Elders is to be, (1.) Of the *crime*, guilt, or offence (2.) Of the *Teſtimony* given unto the truth of it (3.) Of the *means* uſed to bring the offender to acknowledgement and repentance (4.) Of his *deportment* under the private previous admonitions either as to his rejecting of them, or as to any ſatisfaction tendred; all in order, love, meekneſs, and tenderneſs.

Thirdly, Things being propoſed unto the Church, and the offender heard upon the whole of the offence, and former proceeding,

proceeding, the whole Church, or multitude of the Brethren, are with the Elders to conſider the nature of the offence, with the condition and temptations of the offenders, with ſuch a ſpirit of meekneſs as our Lord Jeſus Chriſt in his own perſon ſet them an example of, in his dealing with ſinners, and which is required in them as his Diſciples, *Gal.* 6. 1, 2. 2 *Cor.* 2. 8.

Fourthly, The Elders and Brethren are to judge of the offence, and the carriage of the offender according to rule, and if the offence be evident, and perſiſted in, then

Fifthly, The offender is to be *publickly admoniſhed* by the Elders, with the conſent and concurrence of the Church, 1 *Theſ.* 5. 14. 1 *Tim.* 5. 20. *Matth.* 18. 16, 17. And this admonition conſiſts of Five parts;

(1.) A declaration of the *crime* or offence, as it is evidenced unto the Church.

(2.) A conviction of the *evil* of it, from the rule or rules tranſgreſſed againſt.

(3.) A declaration of the *authority* and duty of the Church in ſuch caſes.

(4.) A

(4.) A rebuke of the offender in the name of Chriſt, anſwering the nature and circumſtances of the offence.

(5.) An Exhortation unto *humiliation* and repentance and acknowledgement.

Eleventhly, In caſe the offender deſpiſe this admonition of the Church, and come not upon it unto repentance, it is the will and appointment of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt that he be *cut off* from all the priviledges of the Church, and caſt out from the ſociety thereof, or be *excommunicated* wherein conſiſts the *laſt act* of the diſcipline of the Church for the correction of offenders; and herein may be conſidered,

Firſt, The nature of it, that it is an *authoritative act* and ſo principally belongs unto the Elders of the Church, who therein exert the power that they have received from the Lord Chriſt, by and with the conſent of the Church according to his appointment, *Matth.* 16. 19. *John* 20. 23. *Matth.* 18. 18. 1 *Cor.* 5. 4. *Titus* 3. 10. 1 *Tim.* 1. 20. 2 *Cor.* 2. 6. And both theſe the Authority of the Elderſhip and the conſent of the

the Brethren, are neceſſary to the validity of the ſentence, and that according to the appointment of Chriſt, and the practice of the firſt Churches.

Secondly, The *effect* of it, which is the cutting off, or caſting out of the perſon offending from the communion of the Church, in the priviledges of the Goſpel, as conſequently from that of all the viſible Churches of Chriſt in the earth by virtue of their communion one with another, whereby he is left unto the viſible kingdom of Satan in the World, *Matth.* 18. 17. 1 *Cor.* 5. 2, 5, 13. 1 *Tim.* 1. 20. *Titus* 3. 10. *Gal.* 5. 12.

Thirdly, The *ends* of it which are,

(1.) The *gaining* of the party offending, by bringing him to repentance, humiliation, and acknowledgement of his offence, 2 *Cor.* 2. 6, 7. 2 *Cor.* 13. 10.

(2.) The *warning* of others not to do ſo preſumptuouſly.

(3.) The *preſerving* of the Church in its purity and order, 1 *Cor.* 5. 6, 7. all to the glory of Jeſus Chriſt.

Fourthly, The *cauſes* of it or the grounds and reaſons on which the Church may proceed unto ſentence againſt

againſt any offending perſons. Now theſe are no other but ſuch as they judge according to the Goſpel, that the Lord Chriſt will proceed upon in his finall judgement at the laſt day. For the Church judgeth in the name and authority of Chriſt, and are to exclude none from its communion, but thoſe whom they find by the rule, that he himſelf excludes from his Kingdom; and ſo that which they bind on earth, is bound by him in Heaven, *Matth.*18.18. And their ſentence herein is to be declared, as the declaration of the ſentence which the Head of the Church, and Judge of all, will pronounce at the laſt day; only with this difference, that it is alſo made known, that this ſentence of theirs, is not final or decretory, but in order to the prevention of that which will be ſo, unleſs the evil be repented of. Now although the particular evils, ſins, or offences, that may render a perſon obnoxious unto this cenſure and ſentence, are not to be enumerated, by reaſon of the variety of circumſtances which change the nature of actions, yet they may

in

in general be referred unto theſe heads.

Firſt, *Moral evils*, contrary to the light of nature, and expreſs commands or prohibitions of the moral law, direct rules of the Goſpel, or of evil report in the world amongſt men walking according to the rule and light of reaſon. And in caſes of this nature, the Church may proceed unto the ſentence whereof we ſpeak, without previous admonition, in caſe the matter of fact be *notorious*, publickly and unqueſtionably known to be true, and no general rule (which is not to be impeached by particular inſtances) lye againſt their proceedure, 1 *Cor.* 5. 3, 4. 2 *Tim.* 3. 2, 3, 4, 5.

Secondly, Offences againſt that *mutual love* which is the bond of perfection in the Church if pertinaciouſly perſiſted in, *Matth.* 18. 16, 17.

Thirdly, *falſe doctrines* againſt the fundamentals in faith or worſhip, eſpecially if maintained with contention, to the trouble and diſturbance of the peace of the Church, *Gal.* 5. 12. *Titus* 3. 9, 10, 11. 1 *Tim.* 6. 3, 4, 5. *Revel.* 2. 14, 15.

Fourthly,

Fourthly, Blaſphemy, or evil ſpeaking of the wayes and worſhip of God in the Church, eſpecially if joyned with an intention to hinder the proſperity of the Church, or to expoſe it to perſecution, 1 *Tim.* 1. 20.

Fifthly, Deſertion, or total cauſeleſs relinquiſhment of the ſociety and communion of the Church; for ſuch are ſelf-condemned, having broken and renounced the covenant of God, that they made at their entrance into the Church, *Heb.* 10. 25, 26, 27, 28, 29.

Sixthly, The time or ſeaſon of the putting forth the authority of Chriſt in the Church for this cenſure, is to be conſidered; and that is ordinarily after the admonition before deſcribed, and that with due waiting, to be regulated by a conſideration of times, perſons, temptations, and other circumſtances. For,

(1.) The Church in proceeding to this ſentence, is to expreſs the patience and long ſuffering of Chriſt towards offenders, and not to put it forth without conviction of a preſent reſolved impenitency.

(2.) The

(2.) The event and effect of the preceding Ordinance of *admonition* is to be expected; which though not at preſent evident, yet like the word it ſelf in the preaching of it, may be bleſſed to a good iſſue after many dayes.

Sixthly, The perſon offending, thus cut off, or caſt out from the preſent actual communion of the Church, is ſtill to be looked on and accounted as a Brother, becauſe of the nature of the Ordinance which is intended for his amendment and recovery, 2 Theſ. 3. 15. *Count him not as an enemy, but admoniſh him as a Brother*; unleſs he manifeſt his finall impenitency, by blaſphemy and perſecution, 1 Tim. 1. 20. *Whom I have delivered unto Satan, that they may learn not to blaſpheme.*

Seventhly, The Church is therefore ſtill to perform the duties of love, and care, towards ſuch perſons.

(1.) In *praying* for them, that they may be converted from the errour of their way, James 5. 19, 20. 1 John 5. 16. *If any man ſee his Brother ſin a ſin, which is not unto death, he ſhall aſk and he ſhall give him life; for them that ſin not unto death.* (2.) In

(2.) In *withdrawing* from them even as to ordinary converſe for their conviction of their ſtate and condition, 1 *Cor.* 5. 11. 2 *Theſ.* 3. 14. *With ſuch a one no not to eat.*

(3.) In *admoniſhing* of him, 2 Cor. 3. 15. *admoniſh him as a Brother*, which may be done (1) *Occaſionally*, by any Member of the Church (2) On *ſet purpoſe* by the conſent and appointment of the whole Church; which admonition is to contain,

(1.) A *preſſing of his ſin* from the rule on the Conſcience of the offender.

(2.) A *declaration* of the nature of the cenſure, and puniſhment which he lyeth under.

(3.) A manifeſtation of the danger of his impenitency, in his being either hardened by the deceitfulneſs of ſin, or expoſed unto new temptations of Sathan.

Eighthly, In caſe the Lord Jeſus be pleaſed to give a bleſſed effect unto this ordinance, in the repentance of the perſon cut of, and caſt out off the Church; he is,

Firſt, To be *forgiven* both by thoſe who in an eſpecial manner were offended at him, and by him, and by the whole Church, *Matth.* 18. 18. 2 *Cor.* 2. 7.

Secondly, To be *comforted* under his ſorrow, 2 *Cor.* 2. 7. And that by (1) The *application* of the promiſes of the Goſpel unto his Conſcience, (2) A declaration of the readineſs of the Church to receive him again into their love and communion.

Fourthly, *Reſtored* (1) By a *confirmation* or teſtification of the love of the Church unto him, 2 *Cor.* 2. 8. (2) A *readmiſſion* unto the exerciſe and enjoyment of his former priviledges in the fellowſhip of the Church; all with a ſpirit of meekneſs, *Gal.* 6. 1.

Queſt. 47. *The preſervation of the Church in purity, order, and holineſs being provided for, by what way is it to be continued and increaſed?*

Anſw. The way appointed thereunto, is by adding ſuch as being effectually called unto the obedience of faith ſhall voluntarily offer themſelves unto the ſociety

ſociety and fellowſhip thereof, Acts 2. 41. 2 Cor. 8. 5.

Explication.

The means appointed by our Lord Jeſus Chriſt for the continuance and increaſe of the Church, are either *preparitory* unto it, or inſtrumentally efficient of it. The principal means ſubſervient or preparitory unto the continuance and increaſe of the Church, is the *preaching of the Word* to the conviction, illumination and converſion of ſinners, whereby they may be made meet to become living ſtones in this ſpiritual building, and members of the myſtical body of Chriſt. And this is done either *ordinarily* in the Aſſemblies of the Church, towards ſuch as come in unto them and attend to the Word diſpenſed according to the appointment of Chriſt amongſt them, 1 Cor. 14. 24, 25. *If there come in one that believeth not, or one unlearned, he is convinced of all, he he is judged of all, and thus are the ſecrets of his heart made manifeſt, and ſo falling down on his face, he will worſhip*

God; *or* occaſionally amongſt the *Men* of the World, Acts 8. 4.

Secondly, the *inſtrumentally efficient* cauſe is that which is expreſſed in the anſwer, namely the *adding* in due order unto it, ſuch as being effectually called unto the obedience of the faith and profeſſion of the Goſpel, do *voluntarily* out of conviction of their duty, and reſolution to walke in ſubjection to all the ordinances and commands of Chriſt, offer themſelves to the ſociety and fellowſhip thereof, whereby they may be laid in this ſpiritual building as the ſtones were in the Temple of old, which were hewed and fitted elſewhere.

Qu. 48 *What is required of them who deſire to joyn themſelves unto the Church?*

An. (1) That they be free from blame and offence in the World. (2) That they be inſtructed in the ſaving truths and myſteries of the Goſpel. (3) Sound in the faith (4) That the Lord having called them unto faith, repentance, and newneſs of life by Jeſus Chriſt, they give up themſelves to

to be ſaved by him, and to obey him in all things; and therefore (5) Are willing and ready through his grace, to walke in ſubjection to all his commands, and in the obſervation of all his lawes and inſtitutions, notwithſtanding any difficulties, oppoſitions, or perſecutions which they meet withall. (1) 1 Phil. 10. Chap. 2. 15. 1 Cor. 10. 32. 1 Theſſ. 2. 11, 12. Tit. 2. 10. (2) John 6. 15. Acts 26. 18. 1 Pet. 2. 9. 2 Cor. 4. 3, 4, 6. (3) 1 Tim. 1. 19, 20. 2 Tim. 4. 3, 4. Tit. 1. 13. Jude 3. (4) Ephe. 4. 20, 21, 22, 23, 24. (5) 2 Cor. 8. 5.

Qu. 49. *What is the duty of the Elders of the Church, towards perſons deſiring to be admitted unto the fellowſhip of the Church?*

An. (1) To diſcern and judge by the rule of truth applied in love, between ſincere profeſſors and hypocritical pretenders. (2) To inſtruct, direct, comfort, and encourage in the way, ſuch as they judge to love the Lord Jeſus in ſincerity. (3) to propoſe and recommend them unto the whole

Church, with prayers and ſupplications to God for them. (4) To admit them being approved into the order and fellowſhip of the Goſpel in the Church. Acts 8. 20, 23. Tit. 1. 10. Rev. 2. 2. Jer. 15. 19. Acts. 18. 26. 1 Theſſ. 2. 7, 8, 11. Acts. 9. 29, 27. Rom. 14. 1.

Qu. 50 *What is the duty of the whole Church in reference unto ſuch perſons?*

An. To conſider them in love and meekneſs, according as their condition is known, reported, or teſtified unto them, to approve of, and rejoice in the grace of God in them, and to receive them in love without diſſimulaton. 1 Cor. 13.

Explication.

What in general is required unto the fitting of any perſons to be members of a viſible Church of Chriſt, was before declared; and that is, that, which the Lord Jeſus hath made the indiſpenſible condition of entring into his Kingdom, namely of being born again. *John* 3. 33.

This

This worke being ſecret, hidden, and inviſible, the Church cannot judge of directly and in its own form or nature, but in the means, effects, and conſequents of it, which are to be teſtified unto it concerning them who are to be admitted unto its fellowſhip and communion; it is required therefore of them,

Firſt, that they be of a converſation free from blame in the world; for whereas one end of the gathering of Churches is to hold forth, and expreſs the holineſs of the doctrine of Chriſt, and the power of his grace in turning Men from all ungodlineſs unto ſobriety, righteouſneſs and honeſty, it is required of them that are admitted into them, that they anſwer this end. And this the principle of grace which is communicated unto them that believe, will effect and produce. For although it doth not follow that every one who hath attained an unblameable honeſty in this World, is inwardly quickened with a true principle of ſaving grace, yet it doth, that they who are indowed with that principle, will be ſo unblameable. And although they may on other accounts be evil ſpoken of,

yet their good converſation in Chriſt will juſtify it ſelf.

Secondly, competent knowledge in the myſteries of the Goſpel, is another means whereby the great qualification inquired after is teſtified unto the Church. For as without this no *priviledge* of the Goſpel can be profitably made uſe of, nor any *duty* of it be rightly performed, ſo *ſaving light* is of the eſſence of converſion and doth inſeparably accompany it, 2 Cor. 4. 6. *God who commanded the light to ſhine out of darkneſs, hath ſhined in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God, in the face of Jeſus Chriſt.* Where this is wanting, it is impoſſible for any perſon to evidence that he is delivered from that blindneſs, darkneſs, and ignorance, which all men are under the power of in the ſtate of nature. Such a meaſure then of light and knowledge, as whereby men are enabled to apprehend aright of the perſon and offices of Chriſt, of the nature of his mediation, the benefits thereof, and the obedience that he requires at the hands of his Diſciples, is expected in them who deſire

deſire to be admitted into the fellowſhip of the Church.

Thirdly, hereunto is to be added, *ſoundneſs* in the faith. For the *unity of faith* is the foundation of Love and all the duties thereof, which in an eſpeciall manner are to be performed towards the Church, called therefore the *houſe-hold of faith*. There is among the members of the Church *one faith*; Epheſ. 4. 5. The common faith, the faith once delivered unto the ſaints, *Jude* 3. Which is the *ſound doctrine*, 1 *Tim.* 1. 10. Which thoſe that will not endure, muſt be turned from; 2 *Tim.* 4. 3. the *faithful word* that is to be held faſt. *Tit.* 1. 9. 1 *Tim.* 1. 19. And which we are to be *ſound* in; *Tit.* 1. 13. Contained in a *form of ſound words*, as to the profeſſion of it, 2 *Tim.* 1. 13. And this *ſoundneſs* in the unity of the faith, as it ſhould be improved unto *oneneſs of mind*, and oneneſs of accord, in all the things of God, *Phil.* 2. 2. Though it may admit of ſome different apprehenſions in ſome things, wherein ſome may have more clear and diſtinct diſcoveries of the mind and will of God than others, which hinders

ders not, but that all may walk according to the ſame rule, *Phil.* 3. 15, 16. So it is principally to be regarded in the *fundamentall truths* of the Goſpel, in and by the faith whereof the Church holdeth on the head Jeſus Chriſt; *Coloſſ.* 2. 19. And in the *fundamentall principles of Goſpel worſhip*, the joynt celebration, whereof is the next end of the gathering the Church, for without a conſent of mind and accord herein, no duty can be performed unto edification, nor the peace of the Church be preſerved; and theſe principles are thoſe which we have explained.

Fourthly, it is required that theſe things be *teſtified* by them unto the Church, with the acknowledgement of the worke of Gods grace towards them, and their reſolution through the power of the ſame grace to cleave unto the Lord Chriſt with full purpoſe of heart, and to live in all holy obedience unto him. They come to the Church, as Diſciples of Chriſt profeſſing that they have learnt the truth as it is in *Jeſus*, which what it infers the Apoſtle teacheth at large;

Epheſ.

*Epheſ.*4. 20,21,22, 23,24. See alſo *Acts* 11.23. *Acts* 8.21,22,23. And this by themſelves to be teſtified unto the Church.

Firſt, that they may be received in love without diſſimulation, as real partakers in the ſame faith, hope and ſalvation with themſelves, as living members of the *myſtical* body of Chriſt.

Secondly, That on all enſuing occaſions, they may be minded of their own profeſſion and engagements, to ſtir them up thereby unto faithfulneſs, ſtedfaſtneſs, and perſeverance. Hereupon are the Elders of the Church to judge by the rule of truth in Love and meekneſs concerning their condition, and meetneſs to be laid as living ſtones in the houſe of God; ſo as that they may,

(1.) Reject falſe *hypocritical* pretenders if in or by any means their *hypocriſie* be diſcovered unto them. *Acts* 8. 20, 23. *Titus* 1. 10. *Jer.* 15. 19.

(2.) That they may direct, and encourage in the way, ſuch as appear to be ſincere, inſtructing them principally in the nature of the way whereinto they are engaging, the duties, dangers, and benefits of it. *Acts* 18. 26. *Act.* 14. 22. 1 *Cor.* 3. 22, 23.

(3.) To

(3.) To propoſe them, their conditions, their deſires, their reſolutions, unto the Church after their own expreſſions of them, to be conſidered of in love and meekneſs; *Acts* 9. 26, 27. Whereupon thoſe that are approved, do give up themſelves unto the Lord, to walk in the obſervation of all his commands and ordinances, and to the Church for the Lords ſake, 2 *Cor.* 8. 5. abiding in the fellowſhip thereof, whereunto they are admitted, *Acts* 2. 41, 42.

Queſt. 51. *Wherein doth the eſpecial forme of a particular* Church *whereby it becomes ſuch, and is diſtinguiſhed as ſuch from all others, conſiſt?*

Anſw. In the ſpecial conſent and agreement of all the members of it, to walk together in the obſervation of the ſame Ordinances numerically; hence its conſtitution and diſtinction from other Churches doth proceed. (Exod. 19. 5, 8. Chap. 24. 3, 7. Deut. 26. 17. 2 Cor. 8. 5. Acts 14. 23. Acts 20. 28. Heb. 13. 17.

Explication.

Explication.

It hath been before declared, what eſpecial agreement or *covenant* there ought to be among all the members of the ſame Church, to walk together in a due ſubjection unto, and obſervance of all the inſtitutions of the Lord Chriſt. And this is that which gives it its ſpecial *form* and diſtinction from all other Churches. In the general nature of a Church, all Churches do agree, and equally partake. There is the ſame *law* of the conſtitution of them all; they have all the ſame *rule* of obedience; all the ſame *Head*, the ſame end; all carry it on by the obſervation of the ſame Ordinances in *kind*. Now beſides theſe things which belong unto the nature of a Church in general, and wherein they all equally participate, they muſt alſo have each one its proper *difference*, that which doth diſtinguiſh it from all other Churches; and this gives it its ſpeciall form as ſuch. Now this cannot conſiſt in any thing that is accidental, occaſional, or extrinſical unto it, ſuch as is

cohabitation

cohabitation, (which yet the Church may have reſpect unto, for conveniency, and farthering of its edification) nor in any civil or *political* diſpoſal of its members into civil ſocieties for civil ends, which is *extrinſecal* to all its concernments as a Church; nor doth it conſiſt in the relation of the Church to its preſent Officers, which may be removed or taken away without the diſſolution of the *form* or being of the Church, but it conſiſteth as was ſaid in the agreement or covenant before mentioned; For

Firſt, This is that which conſtitutes them a *diſtinct body*, different from others; for thereby and no otherwiſe do they coaleſce into a ſociety, according to the law of their conſtitution and appointment.

Secondly, this gives them their *eſpecial relation* unto their own Elders, Rulers, or Guides who watch over them as ſo aſſociated by their own conſent, according unto the command of Chriſt. And

Thirdly, From hence they have their mutual eſpecial relation unto one another

ther which is the ground of the especial exercise of all Church duties whatsoever.

Quest. 52. *Wherein consists the duty of any Church of Christ towards other Churches?*

Answ. (1) In walking circumspectly, so as to give them no offence. (2) In prayer for their peace and prosperity. (3) In communicating supplyes to their wants according to ability. (4) In receiving with lobe and readiness the members of them into fellowship, in the celebration of the Ordinances of the Gospel, as occasion shall be. (5) In desiring and making use of their counsel and advice in such cases of doubt, and difficulty, as may arise among them. (6) In joyning with them to express their communion in the same doctrine of faith. (1) 1 Cor. 10. 32. (2) Psalm. 122. 6. Ephes. 6. 18. 1 Tim. 2. 1. (3) 2 Cor. 8. 4, 6. Acts 11. 29, 30. Rom. 15. 26, 27. (4) Rom. 16. 1, 2. 3 Ep. Joh. 8, 9. (5) Acts 15. 2. (6) 1 Tim. 3. 15.

Explication.

Churches being gathered and ſetled according to the mind of Chriſt, ought to preſerve a mutual holy communion among themſelves, and to exerciſe it, in the diſcharge of thoſe duties whereby their mutuall good and edification may be promoted. For whereas they are all united under *one Head* the Lord Chriſt, *Epheſ.* 1. 22, 23. in the *ſame faith* and order, *Epheſ.* 4. 5. And do walk by the *ſame rule*, they ſtand in ſuch a relation one to another, as is the ground of the communion ſpoken of. Now the principal wayes, whereby they exerciſe this communion, are the acts and *duties* enumerated in the anſwer unto this Queſtion; as,

Firſt, Carefull walking ſo as to give no offence unto one another; which although it be a *moral duty* in reference unto all, yet therein eſpecial regard is to be had unto other Churches of Chriſt, that they be not in any thing grieved or tempted, 1 Cor. 10. 32. *Give none offence,*

offence; neither to the Jews nor to the Gentiles, nor to the Church of God.

Secondly, In constant *prayer* for the peace, welfare, edification and prosperity one of another, *Rom.* 1. 9. *Colos.* 1. 9. *Ephes.* 6. 18. And this because of the special concernment of the name and glory of our Lord Jesus Christ, in their welfare.

Thirdly, In communicating of supplyes for their relief according unto their ability, in case of the outward wants, straits, dangers, or necessities of any of them, *Acts* 11. 29, 30. *Rom.* 15. 26, 27. 2 *Cor.* 8. 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 14.

Fourthly, The receiving of the members of other Churches to communion, in the celebration of Church Ordinances, is another way whereby this communion of Churches is exercised, *Rom.* 16. 1, 2. 3 Ep. *Joh.* 8. 9. For whereas the personal right of such persons unto the Ordinances of the Church, and their orderly walking in the observation of the commands of Christ, are known by the testimony of the Church whereof they are members, they may without farther

enquiry or satisfaction given, be looked on *pro tempore* as members of the Church wherein they desire fellowship, and participation of the Ordinances of Christ.

Fifthly, In desiring or making use of the counsel and advice of one another, in such cases of doubt and difficulty, whether *doctrinal*, or *practical*, as may arise in any of them, *Act.* 15. 2, 6. And from hence it follows, that in case any Church either by errour in doctrine, or precipitation, or mistake in other administrations, do give offence unto other Churches, those other Churches may require an account from them, admonish them of their faults, and withhold communion from them, in case they persist in the errour of their way; and that because *in* their difficulties, and *before* their miscarriages, they were bound to have desired the advice, counsel and assistance of those other Churches, which being neglected by them, the other are to recover the end of it unto their utmost ability, *Gal.* 2. 6. 11. And hence also it follows, that those that are *rightly* and *justly* censured in any Church,

Church, ought to be rejected by all Churches whatever; both becauſe of their mutuall communion, and becauſe it is, and ought to be preſumed, untill the contrary be made to appear, that in caſe there had been any difficulty, or doubt in the proceedure of the Church, they would have taken the advice of thoſe Churches, with whom they were obliged to conſult.

Laſtly, Whereas the Churches have all of them one *common faith*, and are all obliged to *hold forth* and declare it to all men as they have opportunity, 1 *Tim.* 3. 15. to teſtifie this their mutual communion, their intereſt in the ſame faith and hope, for the more open declaration and propoſition of the truths of the Goſpel which they profeſs, and for the vindication both of the truth, and themſelves, from falſe charges and imputations, they may, and if God give opportunity, *ought* to joyn together in declaring and teſtifying their joynt conſent and fellowſhip in the ſame doctrine of faith, expreſſed in a *form of ſound words*.

Queſt. 53.

Quest. 53. *What are the ends of all this dispensation and order of things in the Church?*

Answ. The glory of God, the honour of Jesus Christ the Mediator, the furtherance of the Gospel, the edification and consolation of Believers here; with their eternal salvation hereafter. Rev. 4. 9, 10, 11. Chap. 5. 12, 13. 1 Cor. 3 22. 23. Ephes. 4. 11, 12, 13.

Finis.

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